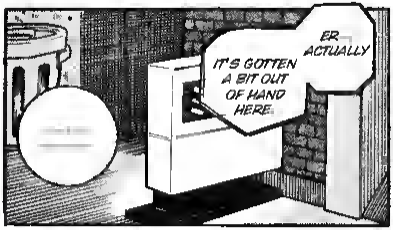
CHAPTER
1
INNOCENCE

KA-CHING
BRRRING
BRRRRING
BRRRING


ER... ACTUALLY
IT'S GOTTEN A BIT OUT OF HAND HERE...

HELLO, TEN M'BOY
IT'S HEII, FROM THE FISH MARKET
OH... HEY.

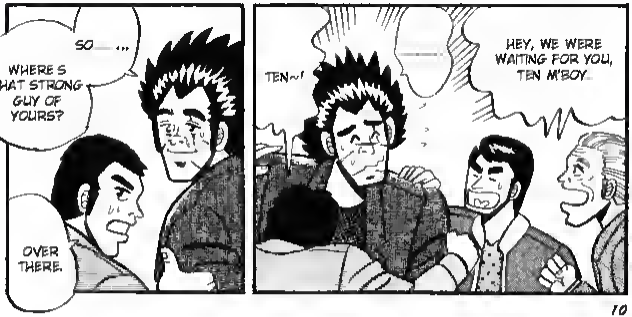
EVERYONE FROM DOWNTOWN HAS PRETTY MUCH LOST
WHAT? IS HE A SERIOUS PLAYER?
ER, NO. NOT AT A QUICK GLANCE, BUT...

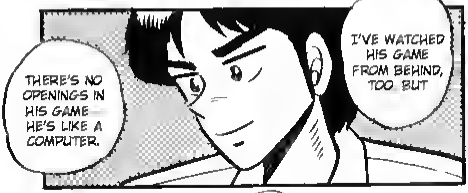
IT SEEMS LIKE IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE YOU PLAYED MAHJONG
AND EVERYBODY'S COUNTING ON YOU TOO
DON'T SAY THAT
TEN, M'BOY
IF THAT'S HOW IT IS... CAN'T YOU DO SOMETHING UNTIL I GET THERE?
CHING
I'LL BE OVER AFTER I'M FINISHED HERE
SORRY ABOUT ALL THIS, THANKS
EVEN AFTER YOU SAID YOU WOULDN'T DO ANY MORE THIS YEAR
ARE YOU GONNA TAKE THE JOB?
WHAT WAS THAT? IS IT ABOUT WORK?

THAT'S IT, I'VE JUST ABOUT HAD IT WITH THEM!
THOSE GUYS!! WHENEVER THERE'S THE LEAST BIT OF TROUBLE, THEY ACT LIKE A BUNCH OF BABIES.
NOW, NOW...
IT'LL BE FINE TODAY. SO JUST TAKE IT EASY.
I HEARD IT'S NOT A SERIOUS PLAYER
BUT
Y-YOU'RE EXAGGERATING
IF YOU GET HURT ANY MORE THAN YOU HAVE BEFORE YOU'LL END UP DEAD
EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE SAYING THAT YOU'RE PROBABLY GOING TO GET BEAT UP AGAIN

EVEN IF IT'S ONLY SOMEONE LIKE ME
I CAN BE EVERY-ONE'S STRENGTH.
THAT'S WHAT MAKES ME HAPPY .....
A MORON LIKE YOU!
THEY'RE ONLY USING YOU ...
カク..
PHEW

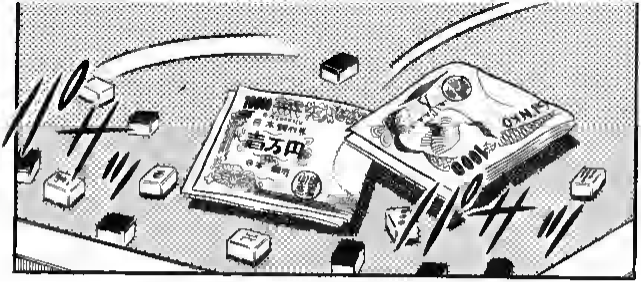
TADAAAA.
MAHJONG


SO.....
WHERE'S THAT STRONG GUY OF YOURS?
OVER THERE.
TEN~!
HEY, WE WERE WAITING FOR YOU, TEN M'BOY.

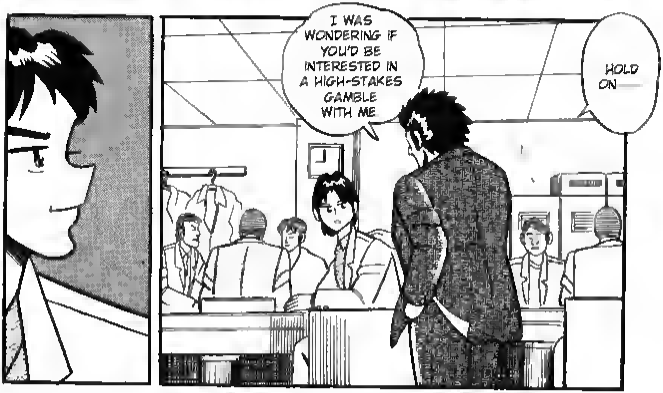

I'VE WATCHED HIS GAME FROM BEHIND, TOO. BUT
THERE'S NO OPENINGS IN HIS GAME HE'S LIKE A COMPUTER.

HE'S JUST A KID...
MAYBE, BUT...
HE'S STILL RIDICULOUSLY GOOD

HMMM
WELL, AS LONG AS IT'S TEN, I THINK IT'LL BE FINE
DON'T UNDER-ESTIMATE HIM



HE'S TOUGH, THIS GUY
I QUIT... QUIT, I SAY!!
SHIT


I WAS WONDERING IF YOU'D BE INTERESTED IN A HIGH-STAKES GAMBLE WITH ME
HOLD ON...

LOOK.
WHY NOT LET ME GIVE THEM TO SOMEONE ELSE
WELL, BUT I DON'T REALLY CARE ABOUT THE WINNINGS
SASHI-UMA, THEN?
WITH YOU
320,000
185,000
THOSE OLD FELLAS WHOSE ASSES YOU KICKED UP UNTIL THIS POINT ARE PROBABLY WANTING TO GET IN ON THE WINNINGS
I'M SURE YOU REMEMBER
270,000
190,000
U—...
WHY, IF YOU LOST, YOU COULD JUST GIVE UP THE AMOUNT YOU WON SO FAR——
RIGHT! PLEASE!
IS THERE SOMETHING ON MY SHIRT?
WHAT, WHAT

SO THERE REALLY ARE PEOPLE LIKE YOU.
HUUUUUH.

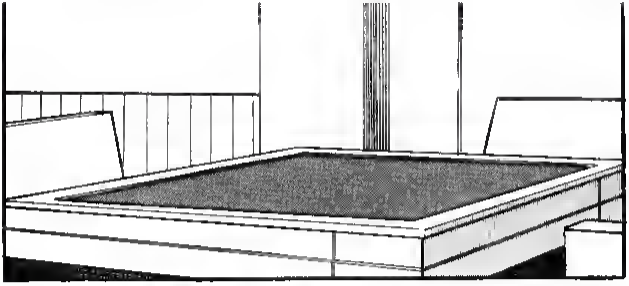
HUH?
A GUY THAT WORKS ON CONTRACT FOR UNDERWORLD SOCIETY.
YOU'RE A PRO, RIGHT ?
HUH?

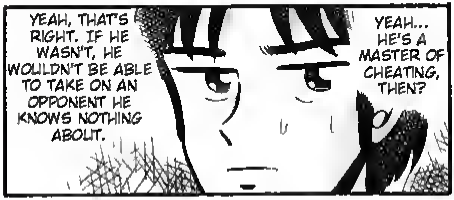
HUH ..... ?
?

I HATE THOSE AUTO-MATED TABLES.
WELL, COME OVER HERE.

I'M SO GLAD.
REALLY?
IT'S GOOD TO BE YOUNG, ISN'T IT!! YOU'RE CURIOUS!

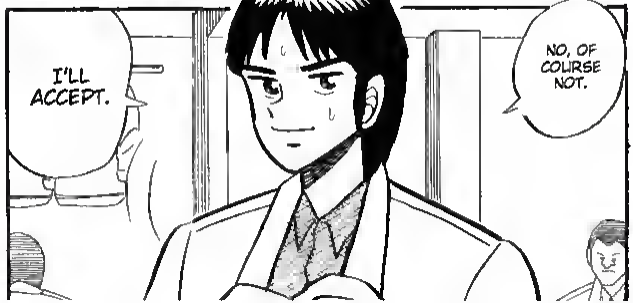
I COULD TRY PLAYING YOU A BIT
HUH?

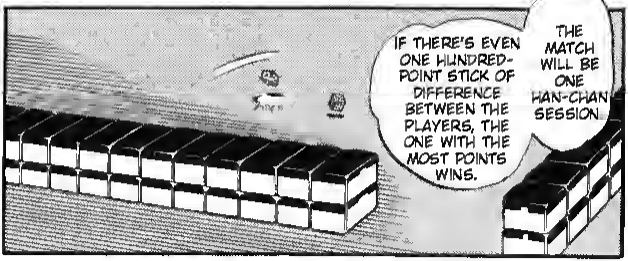


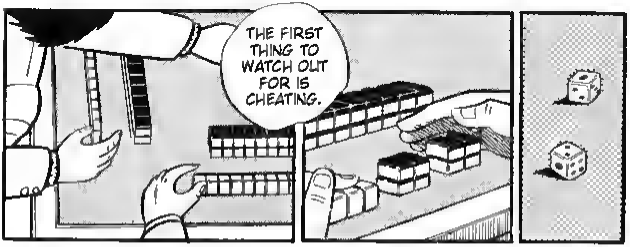

YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT. IF HE WASN'T, HE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO TAKE ON AN OPPONENT HE KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT.
YEAH... HE'S A MASTER OF CHEATING, THEN?

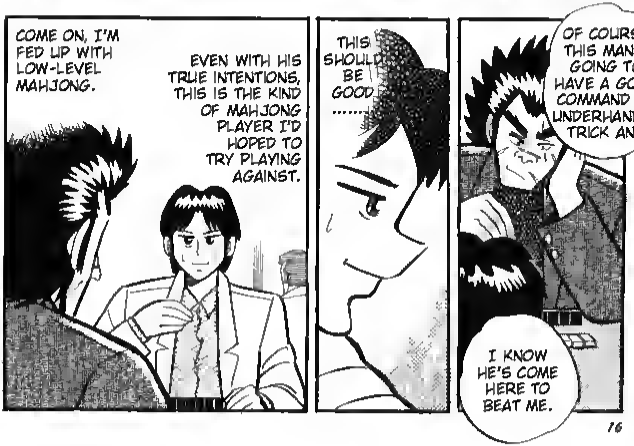
A PLAIN TABLE.....

AFTER MAKING ME SO HAPPY~.
WHAT'S WRONG? DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE GONNA QUIT NOW.


I'LL ACCEPT.
NO, OF COURSE NOT.


IF THERE'S EVEN ONE HUNDRED-POINT STICK OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PLAYERS, THE ONE WITH THE MOST POINTS WINS.
THE MATCH WILL BE ONE HAN-CHAN SESSION


THE FIRST THING TO WATCH OUT FOR IS CHEATING.


COME ON, I'M FED UP WITH LOW-LEVEL MAHJONG.
EVEN WITH HIS TRUE INTENTIONS, THIS IS THE KIND OF MAHJONG PLAYER I'D HOPED TO TRY PLAYING AGAINST.
THIS SHOULD BE GOOD.....
OF COURSE THIS MAN'S GOING TO HAVE A GOOD COMMAND OF UNDERHANDED TRICK AND
I KNOW HE'S COME HERE TO BEAT ME.

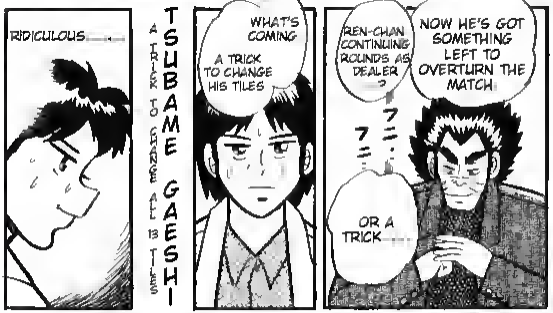
RIICHI!
IS HE DECLARING IT TO LURE OUT HIS WINNING TILE?
HAS HE GOT A NUMBER OF TILES TO WAIT ON?
AT A GLANCE, I DONT GET ANYTHING FROM HIS DISCARDS.
HE SHOULDN'T BE WANTING TO BE COUNTING ON SOMETHING LIKE RIICHI.
THAT'S STRANGE. AT AN IMPORTANT ROUND IN SASHI-UMA
CARE-FULLY .....
I DON'T KNOW.
BUT, THERE'S NO WAY I CAN DEAL INTO HIS HAND IN SASHI-UMA.

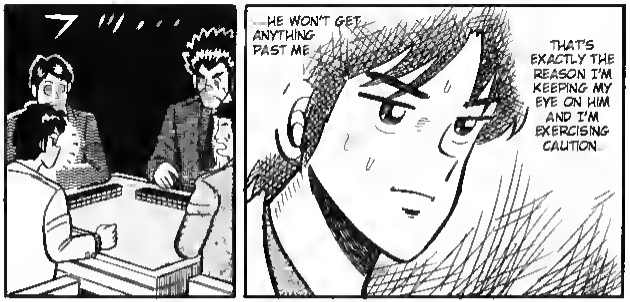
ROOOON.
AH.
HUH?
THAT 9-MAN WOULD'VE COMPLETED YOUR HAND, SO YOU'RE IN FURITEN.
...HUH ...?
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO THINK ABOUT THAT...?
DID HE LET DOWN HIS GUARD?
IN A SINGLE HAN-CHAN SESSION I WOULDN'T THINK HE'D BE THAT CARELESS.
BUT...

カミッ
HE'S GOING TO BE HARD TO DEAL WITH.
BECAUSE HE'S A MAN THAT DOES THIS FOR A LIVING.....
NO, NO.
RO... RON.
HUH?
NO MATTER HOW LONG I WAIT...
I'M IN TENPAI, BUT WAITING ON A SINGLE TILE THAT NOBODY'S PUT OUT YET.
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO THINK
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO THINK
A TILE NOBODY HAD DISCARDED YET IN THE 12TH TURN, EVEN THOUGH HE COULD CLEARLY SEE I WAS GOING FOR A HON-ITSU HAND.
WHAAAAAAA!!
HARD TO DEAL WITH... OR SOME-THING LIKE THAT... THAT'S WHAT THIS IS TOO.

I GUESS IT'S ABOUT THE SAME THING.
BUT BECAUSE THE MATCH IS ONLY ONE HAN-CHAN SESSION
HE'S MERELY A BAD PLAYER.
OR HE'S GETTING CAUGHT OFF-GUARD AGAIN.
SOUTH 1ST ROUND
HE SHOULD BE UP TO SOME TRICKS.
IT SHOULDN'T BE LIKE THIS.
BUT THAT CAN'T BE.
.....
.....?
SINCE WE'RE BETTING A LOT OF MONEY.
HE CAN'T JUST BE DANCING AROUND LIKE A MORON, CAN HE?
WHY...?
WHAT'S GOING ON!!
24000 POINT LEAD
SOUTH 3RD ROUND
18000 POINT LEAD
SOUTH 2ND ROUND

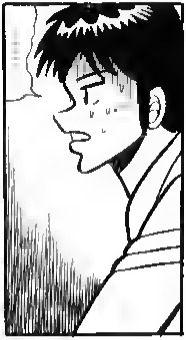
SOUTH 4TH ROUND
TEN IS THE LAST DEALER
HMM...
HMM...
AND THERE'S ONLY ONE ROUND LEFT.

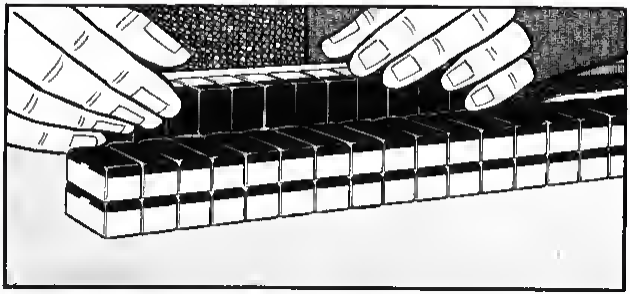

RIDICULOUS...
TSUBAME GAESHI
A TRICK TO CHANGE ALL 13 TILES
WHAT'S COMING
A TRICK TO CHANGE HIS TILES
REN-CHAN CONTINUING ROUNDS AS DEALER...?
NOW HE'S GOT SOMETHING LEFT TO OVERTURN THE MATCH
フニ・・・
フニ・・・
OR A TRICK...
A 32000 POINT LEAD IN THE LAST ROUND


HE WON'T GET ANYTHING PAST ME
THAT'S EXACTLY THE REASON I'M KEEPING MY EYE ON HIM AND I'M EXERCISING CAUTION

WE LOST POWER?
WAH, WHAT HAPPENED?
HA-HANG ON, I'LL GET THE LIGHTS!

I HIT THE SWITCH WITH MY ELBOW.
SORRY.





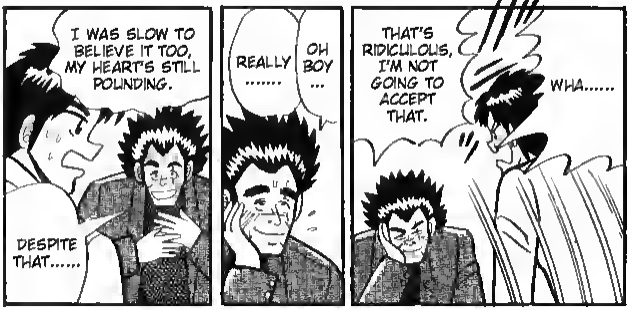
OH, HEY.

IT'S FAINT BUT THE WALL IN FRONT OF HIM MOVED.

IT MOVED .....
I CAN REMEMBER IT.....

TENHOU, CHUUREN-POOTON.
ウオーン
WOOHOOOOOO!!
HE DID IT.

YOU DID IT IN THE END!!
THAT WAS AMAZING~.
TEN!


I WAS SLOW TO BELIEVE IT TOO, MY HEART'S STILL POUNDING.
DESPITE THAT.....
REALLY .....
OH BOY ...
THAT'S RIDICULOUS, I'M NOT GOING TO ACCEPT THAT.
WHA.....

THAT'S 96000 POINTS.
MAHJONG'S A SCARY THING, ISN'T IT.

THE NIGHTS I WIN WITH TENHOU, I ALWAYS GET BEAT UP BY PEOPLE.

I TOLD YOU YOU CAN GO AHEAD AND HIT ME.

HOW LONG ARE YOU GONNA BE MAD?

HEY

HUH ...?

THEN THAT JUST PROVES IT WAS A TRICK.

IT'S NOT IN MY NATURE.

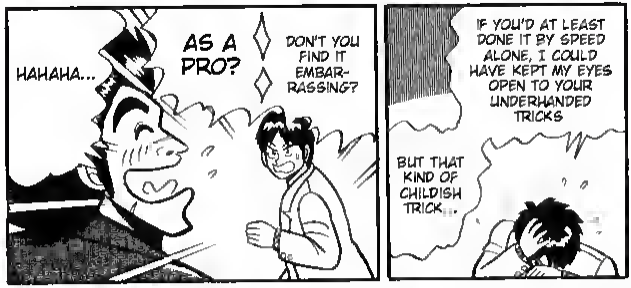
I DON'T CHEAT OR ANY-THING.

THAT TENHOU WAS A COINCI-DENCE.

SO THAT'S WHAT YOU MEANT.

.....

HUH?
I'M NOT GOING TO ACCEPT IT
ANY-WAY
IT SEEMS LIKE THEY CHEER UP WHEN THEN HIT ME
JUST.. NOBODY BELIEVES ME WHEN I WIN WITH TENHOU
HA HA HA


HAHAHA...
AS A PRO?
DON'T YOU FIND IT EMBAR-RASSING?
IF YOU'D AT LEAST DONE IT BY SPEED ALONE, I COULD HAVE KEPT MY EYES OPEN TO YOUR UNDERHANDED TRICKS
BUT THAT KIND OF CHILDISH TRICK...

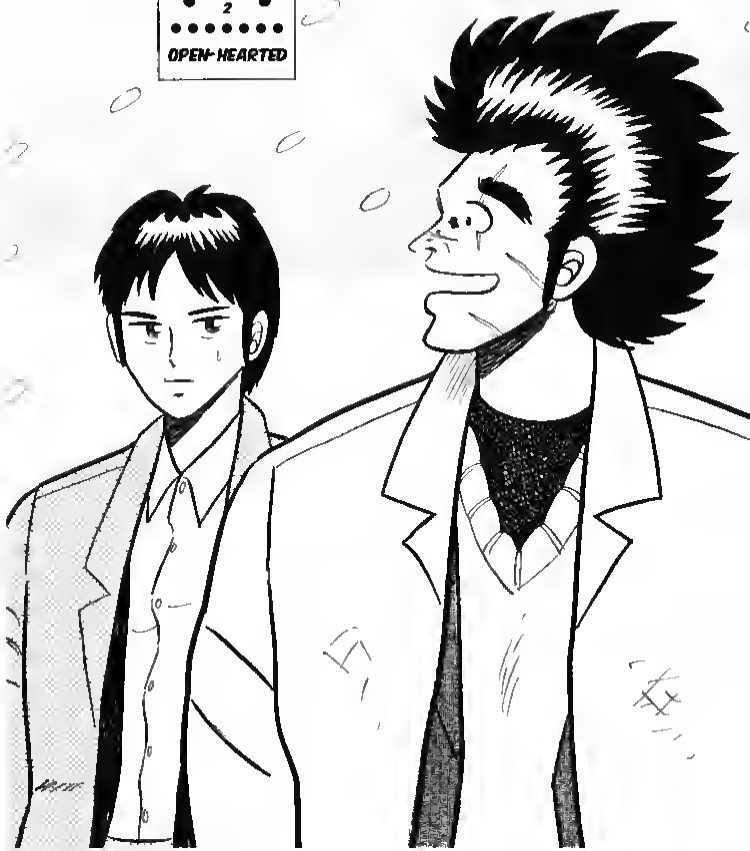
WHOA
THEN WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?
.....
IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER TO ME, BUT IT SURE WAS CLOSE. IT WAS ALL I COULD DO TO WIN THE MATCH. YOU'RE DEFINITELY GOOD AT MAHJONG, BUT IT'S A FINE LINE, ISN'T IT? LIKE WITH SHIZUOKA FROM THE GIANTS.

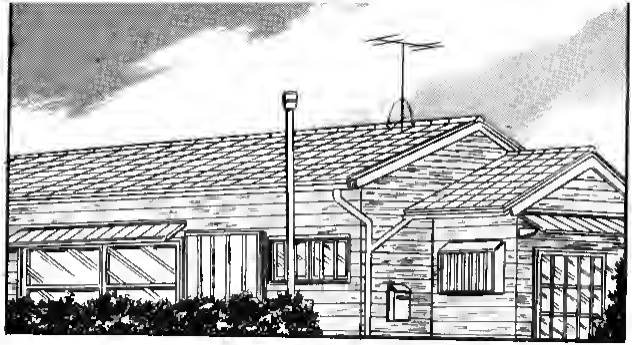
THE NOVICES FROM THE TAKESHI GROUP.
OOSUGI FROM THE YAKULTS, WHO CRACKED A MAJOR HOME RUN AGAINST
UM—— BUT SPEAKING OF CHILDISH, THAT WAS CHILDISH OF ME, WASN'T IT.
IT WAS THE THIRD TIME THIS YEAR HE GOT TENHOU CHUUREN-POOTON
THE WANDERER WHO GOT TENHOU, KNOWN AS TEN.

天

CHAPTER 2

OPEN-HEARTED

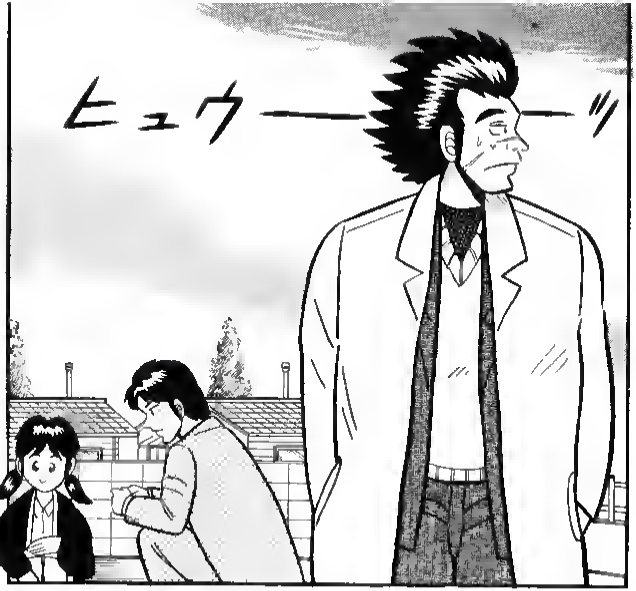




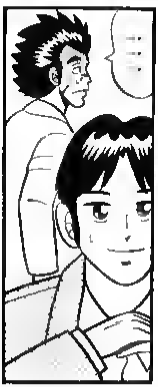
GIMME A BREAK... YOU GUYS...
KICHINO TATSUMI (AGE 35)

I'VE GOT MY OWN EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES TO FOLLOW!
MOLTHING OFF ABOUT PROBLEMS IN SOMEONE ELSE'S HOUSE!

SO GIVE IT UP, YOU DAMN DRUNKARD!
ALL WE WANT IS TO GET TOGETHER FOR A PARTY ON CHRISTMAS EVE FOR NAOKO.
GAH.
IT'S NOT LIKE IT'S THAT BIG A DEAL!
WHAAAAAAT? DON'TCHA THINK YOU'RE OVERSTEPPING YOUR AUTHORITY! INTRUDING UPON THE RIGHTS OF THIS FAMILY! YOU TRYING TO RESTRICT MY FREEDOM?!
GAAH~.
THIS IS JAPAN, WE DON'T GET MIXED UP IN WESTERN CUSTOMS!
A WESTERN-STYLE PARTY LIKE THAT IS JUST GONNA DEFILE OUR LOWER-CLASS LIFESTYLE!
HE'S STARTED AGAIN...
JUST QUIT IT ALREADY!
A PARTY, YOU SAY! A PARTY...
...
...
...
SHADDUP, YOU!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, TRAVELLING BACK IN TIME TO THE MEIJI ERA?!
DON'T YOU DARE KEEP ON SLAMMING IT WITH THAT KIND OF LANGUAGE, ALL "THE WEST", "THE WEST".
ガリ ギャッ
GWAAH~.


ヒュウ――――ッ

I WONDER WHY THEY'RE ARGUING OVER THIS KIND OF THING.
THIS FAMILY'S KIND OF UNUSUAL.
BUT, YOU KNOW
HMMM


...

IT SOUNDS LIKE THEY'RE ARGUING
KICHINO NAOKO
CAGE 72

I ONLY SAID I WANTED TO HAVE AN ORDINARY CHRISTMAS
AND HAVE A CHRISTMAS TREE...
AND HAVE CAKE... EVERYBODY'S MAKING A BIG DEAL OF IT.
THERE MIGHT BE STOCKINGS FULL OF CANDY AND STUFF, RIGHT? I'D GET STUFF LIKE THAT...
HMMM...
IT'LL BE OKAY.
AFTER ALL, TATSUMI'S ALWAYS THINKING OF YOU, NAOKO.
I'M SURE HE'LL LISTEN.
REAL-LY?
YOU MORON! DON'T EVER COME BACK HERE AGAIN!
HEY
LIKE I'D WANT TO!
IDIOT!
WHAT A JERK~~~~ HE JUST DOESN'T GET IT.
I CAN'T BELIEVE HIM...

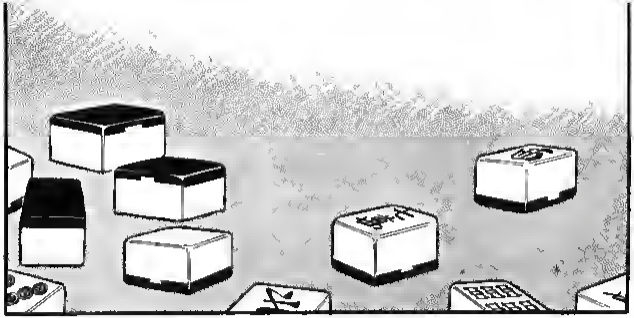
WE CAN'T GIVE UP ON HAVING A CHRISTMAS PARTY. WE'LL DO IT! WE HAVE TO, AFTER PROMISING IT TO NAOKO.
WELL... BUT ANYWAY
I'M ALWAYS CALM AND COLLECTED.
HOW COULD YOU!
.....
YOU WERE JUST MAKING MATTERS WORSE, WEREN'T YOU?
ANYWAY, WE HAD A BREAKDOWN IN COMMUNICATION.
THESE PEOPLE KEEP ON INTERFERING IN OTHER PEOPLE'S LIVES...
ALRIGHT!
.. ALRIGHT —?
ALRIGHT
SO THAT WE DON'T LOSE TRACK OF THAT STUPID OLD FART, YOU DRAG HIM BACK THERE AROUND 6— OR MAYBE 7 ON THE 24TH, TEN

ひばり通り
DECEMBER 24
SO,
WE'RE GOING TO GRAB HIM TODAY, I GUESS
……
そば
YEAH……
SIGH.
TUX
ガタ..
WELL... WE ONLY HAVE TO TAKE ACTION TONIGHT.
IT'S ONLY LUNCHTIME, SO WE WON'T YET……
ズズー

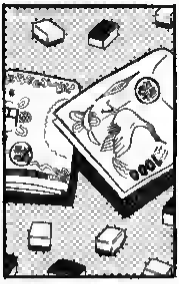
麻雀
スポーツ
麻雀スポ
TEL042-74
お一人様でもどうぞ
YEEE AAAA HHH
HUH?
LET'S PLAY MAHJONG.

IF I MAKE HIM USE UP ALL THE MONEY HE'S GOT, HE WON'T HAVE ANY CHOICE BUT TO SHUT UP AND GO HOME TODAY!
WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT, THE ONLY REASON THAT OLD DRUNK'S WANDERING AROUND IS 'CAUSE HE'S GOT MONEY, RIGHT!
NO— I'M PLAYING!
AREN'T WE JUST SUPPOSED TO WATCH HIM TODAY—
I DON'T CARE!
BUT IF YOU'RE SERIOUSLY GOING TO PLAY MAHJONG—
YEAH...?
YEAH!
スゥ
スゥ
EAST 1ST ROUND
OH— HEY THERE, TEN
I'M JOINING IN—
COME ON IN

RON!
WHERE DO YOU GO WANDERING OFF TO, EVERY NIGHT!
SORRY, TATSUMI, BUT I'M GONNA HAVE TO KICK YOU ASS TODAY...
PROBABLY HAS TO DO WITH A WOMAN OR SOMETHING!
.....
BUT... JUST FOR TODAY, WE CAN'T LET YOU BE DOING THAT
BEING ROUGH ON ME FROM THE START, HUH
OH MAN~~
FOR A PARENT AND CHILD
CHRISTMAS IS A SPECIAL DAY



SORRY, TEN M'BOY. WELL--- MAYBE SOME OTHER TIME, HUH
WHEW
HUH~



YOU ONLY WON THE VERY FIRST ROUND.
SEE? THAT'S WHY I THOUGHT IT WOULDN'T GO WELL IF YOU WERE SERIOUS ABOUT PLAYING. MAYBE NEXT TIME YOU'LL REALIZE HOW BAD YOU ARE WHEN YOU PLAY SERIOUSLY ..
...

カク..

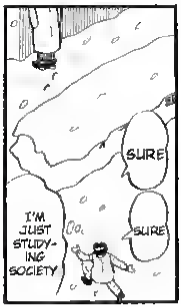
IT'S GOTTA BE ABOUT A WOMAN
WHAT... HUH... ISN'T THIS A BUNKHOUSE?
SLIDE

THAT DIRTY BASTARD HE'S NOT HEADING TOWARD HIS HOUSE AT ALL
THE WORDS HE'S USING HAVE CHANGED ALREADY

I'LL GRAB HIM!!
THAT DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUN-DREL!!

I'LL BE THERE IN HALF AN HOUR
OKAY... I'VE HAD IT. HIROYUKI, YOU GO ON AHEAD
SIGH

TOO FUCKIN' CHEAP TO GO TO A HOTEL


I'M JUST STUDYING SOCIETY
SURE
SURE

I'LL JUST TAKE A QUICK PEEK
SNEAK DATING, HUH?

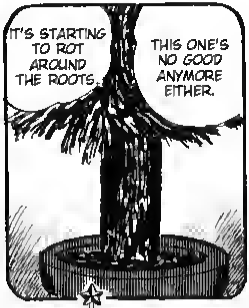
IT WAS LIKE HE WAS GOING TO BARGE IN THERE A MINUTE AGO
WHY'S HE LOOKING DEJECTED
建設

HUH

A CHRISTMAS TREE!
I SEE ...
TATSUMI HAD BEEN THINKING ABOUT CHRISTMAS FOR NAOKO ALL ALONG
WE'VE BEEN SUCH IDIOTS
JUST BLABBING ON AND ON
AND HE'S BEEN PLAYING DEVIL'S ADVOCATE

"MUST BE NICE TO BE RICH... THEY JUST THREW AWAY THAT HUGE FIR TREE."
SPEAKING OF WHICH, WASN'T THERE SOMETHING TATSUMI SAID?

HUH
PLEASE TAKE THIS ONE AND BURN IT TOO...
THAT TREE TOO...?


IT'S STARTING TO ROT AROUND THE ROOTS.
THIS ONE'S NO GOOD ANYMORE EITHER.

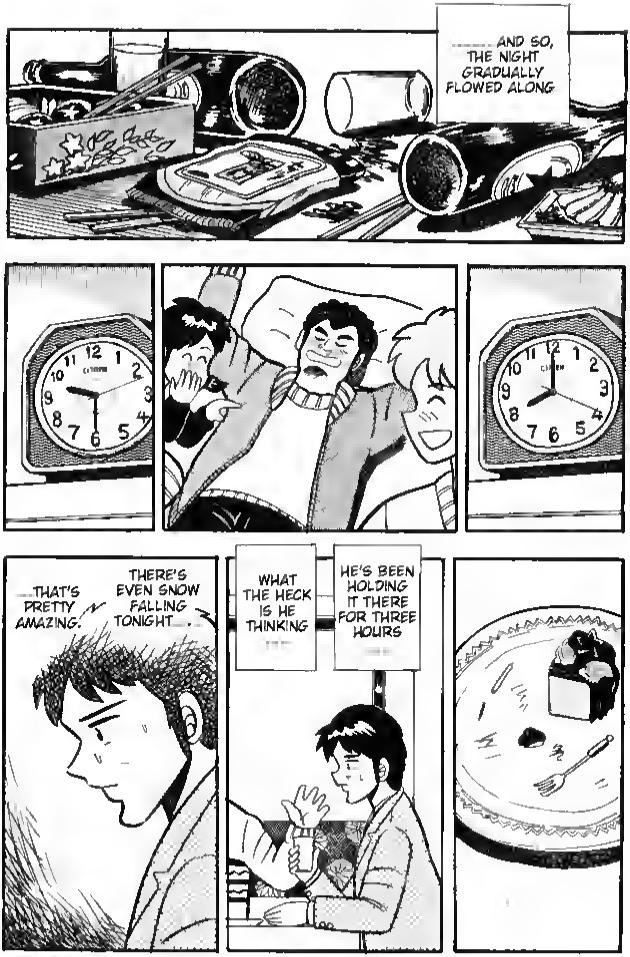
HE'S BEEN WORKING SOMEWHERE FOR SURE
AND HE WENT TO LOOK AFTER IT EVERY NIGHT
SO HE COULD DECORATE IT AND BUY PRESENTS...

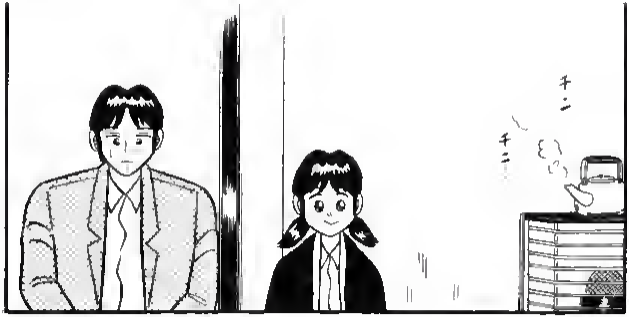
BROUGHT IT BACK WITH HIM
MAYBE THAT FIR DIDN'T GET BURNED AND TATSUMI

TATSUMI'S HOUSE
FOR SURE TATSUMI... MORE THAN ANYONE...
WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS DAY...
OKAY
YOU CAN SEE IT FROM THE WINDOW HERE
HEH, HEH...
CREAK, CREAK...

NAO!
DADDY!
ガラッ
AH
TATSUMI
HERE IT IS!
OH NO.
YOU CAN'T...
ER.
I'VE GOT SOMETHING I WANT YOU TO SEE, NAOKO.
TATSU-MI!
THAT'S...
HANG ON...

わぉ～～～っ!
WOOOW~~~
...?
.....
.....
I GET IT...
OH...
AH.
.....


AND SO, THE NIGHT GRADUALLY FLOWED ALONG
THAT'S PRETTY AMAZING.
THERE'S EVEN SNOW FALLING TONIGHT...
WHAT THE HECK IS HE THINKING
HE'S BEEN HOLDING IT THERE FOR THREE HOURS


チーン
チーン

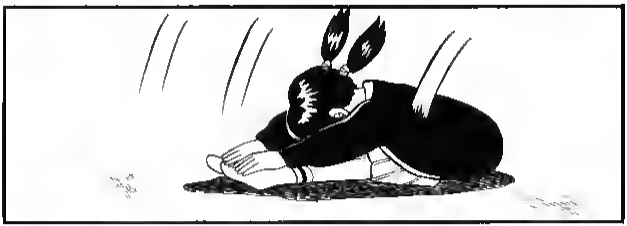
I KNOW THERE ISN'T REALLY A SANTA CLAUS, BUT
IF THERE WAS ONE, I'D BELEIVE IT TODAY.
?....

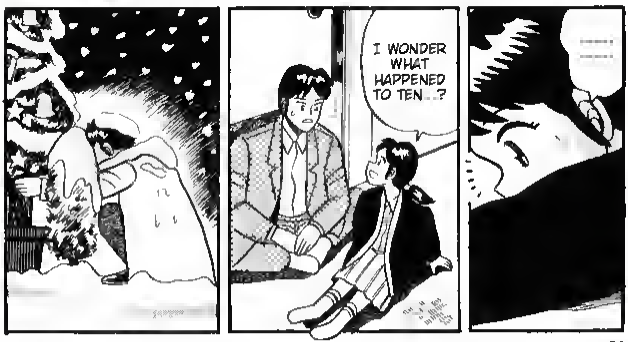
YEAH?
YOU KNOW... IT'S A WEIRD THING TO SAY BUT, WELL...

IF THERE WAS A SANTA CLAUS

...
...
TONIGHT TURNED OUT JUST LIKE I ASKED SANTA FOR

HE MIGHT REALLY EXIST.




I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED TO TEN...?
.....

YEAH, MAYBE HE'S SANTA CLAUS.
HMMMM
MAYBE SOME WORK CAME UP THAT HE HAD TO DO
.....
HE CAN'T LEAVE WORK ON THE NIGHT OF THE 24TH
BECAUSE TODAY... HE MIGHT NOT COME.....
YOU BIG STUPID LIAR!
HA HA HA ..
NO WAY!

HE REALLY MIGHT BE SANTA CLAUS .....
NO.....

天

CHAPTER 3

ARROGANCE

I MOVED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR
I WAS A NORMAL STUDENT WHO TOOK A YEAR OFF BEFORE THE TAKING THE UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE EXAM.
IGAWA HIRO-YUKI
ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT
STOOOOP!
HE WAS AN AQUAINTANCE FROM THE MAHJONG PARLOR AND I WAS MOVING IN NEXT DOOR TO THEM
I HAD A LOT OF CONFID-ENCE IN MY PLAYING
THE ONLY UNUSUAL PART WAS THAT TO EARN TUITION AND MAKE SOME SPENDING MONEY I WAS PLAYING MAHJONG

THEY'VE BEEN PARTICULARLY NICE TO ME
THE GAVE ME A HAND WHEN I WAS MOVING AND MADE FOOD FOR ME
I OWE A LOT TO THEM.
THEY GAVE ME THINGS
A FUTON AND A KOTATSU, TOO
MAKE SURE TO USE THEM!
EAT! EAT!
BUT THINKING BACK ON IT NOW... THAT GENEROSITY WAS A CANCER
BECAUSE IT WAS GREATER THAN I HAD SUSPECTED IT WAS

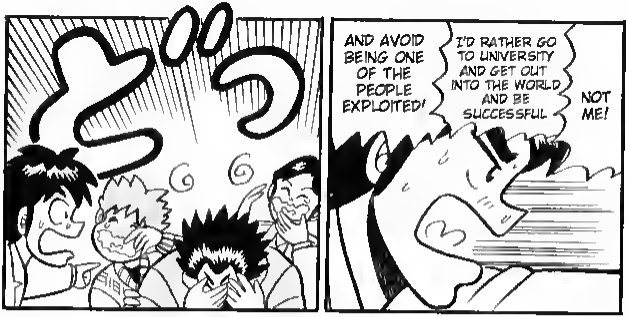
THEY'RE NOT SMART, BUT AS PEOPLE, AS HUMAN BEINGS
HER... OR HIM EITHER...
I'M SURE THEY'RE NOT BAD PEOPLE...
THEY'RE NOT BAD PEOPLE
THIS WAY, THE MAHJONG THAT I PLAYED SOMETIMES COULD BE SAVED UP FOR THE APPLICATION FEE AND TUITION...
YEAH... THE PEOPLE HERE ARE POOR, SO WHEN I WIN NEXT TIME...
THIS WAY, I COULD FOCUS ON STUDYING...
THE TRUTH WAS I WAS THANKFUL...

OH YEAH... I GAVE IT AWAY...
UH. DO YOU KNOW WHERE MY JACKET WENT?
ハチニ
HUH...?
I THOUGHT I HAD A JACKET HANGING HERE.
?
HUH~?
I GAVE IT AWAY, TO THAT OLD GUY FROM THE UNDERWORLD HE WAS PRETTY HAPPY ABOUT IT.
HUH?
NOT JUST PEOPLE'S THINGS HIS OWN TOO
EVERYTHING
HE WAS JUST SYMPATHETIC AND SHARED
WHAT WAS A SURPRISE WAS THAT HE WASN'T MALICIOUS ABOUT IT!

ONE WEEK LATER
WHEN I MOVED
ずん ずん ずん ん
I THOUGHT THE GROUND WAS SOFT, IS THIS DOGSHIT?~
UWAAH
HAHAHA, NO YOU MORON!
ずん ずん
ゆけ ゆけ
飛雄馬

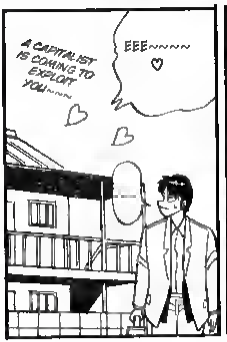
THOSE ARE MY CLOTHES!
WHY DID YOU... I JUST TOLD YOU AND YOU WENT AND TOOK THEM WITHOUT ASKING!
OH, I'LL GIVE 'EM BACK...
TEEEENNNNNN
HA HA HA AWESOOOME
I DID IT A LITTLE WHILE AGO.
ずん
ずん
YOU CAN STAY HERE AS LONG AS YOU LIKE! WE'VE GOTTEN SO MUCH FROM YOU! DON'T LEAVE.
I DON'T REMEMBER GIVING YOU A SINGLE THING
WHATEVER! I'M LEAVING!
HEY, HEY WAIT!!
I CAN MAKE MONEY AGAIN ON MY OWN PLAYING MAHJONG!
ANYMORE
IT'S NOT HIS HOME

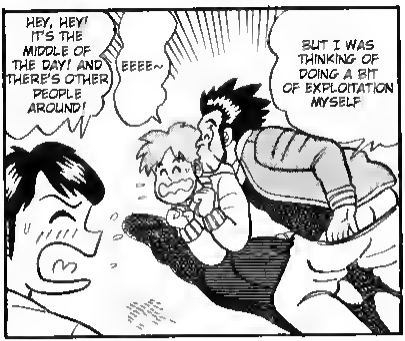
YOU'VE BEEN EXPLOITED BY CAPITALISTS YOUR WHOLE LIVES!! YOU'VE BEEN POOR YOUR WHOLE LIVES!
Y-YOU, ALL OF YOU! IT'S ALL BECAUSE YOU THINK ALL PROPERTY IS FOR COMMON USE, LIKE A BUNCH OF INDIANS!


どっ
AND AVOID BEING ONE OF THE PEOPLE EXPLOITED!
I'D RATHER GO TO UNIVERSITY AND GET OUT INTO THE WORLD AND BE SUCCESSFUL
NOT ME!

どっ
ぷいっ
I'VE HAD ENOUGH, I'M LEAVING
EEEEEE~~ BUT MAGISTRATE~ I CAN'T GIVE YOU ANY MORE THAN THE ANNUAL TRIBUTE~
HEY, YOU MUST BE THE INDIAN! KEEP BEING EXPLOITED~!
NO POINT TALKING TO YOU GUYS ANYMORE

SURE WASN'T BORING
HE LEFT~~ BUT THAT WAS PRETTY FUNNY~~
WHEW.
IT WAS LIKE HE WAS GOING TO BITE HIS TONGUE THE WAY HE WAS GOING ON ABOUT EXPLOITATION.

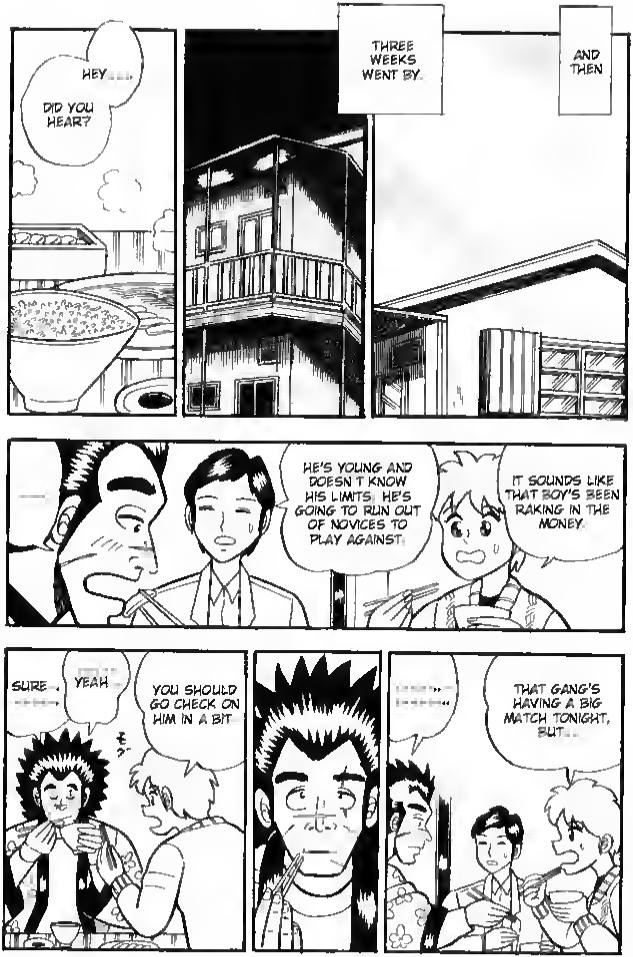

A CAPITALIST IS COMING TO EXPLOIT YOU~~~
EEE~~~~


HEY, HEY! IT'S THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY! AND THERE'S OTHER PEOPLE AROUND!
EEEE~
BUT I WAS THINKING OF DOING A BIT OF EXPLOITATION MYSELF

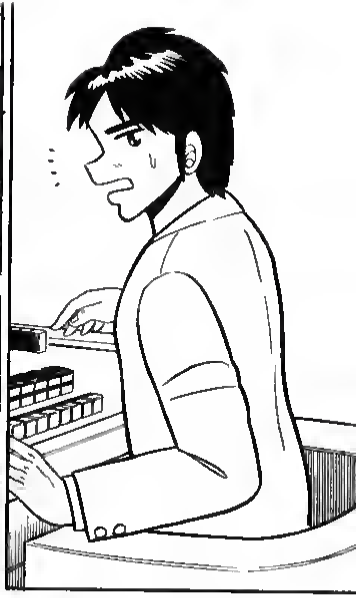
HEY, HEY...
TOOK THEM WITHOUT ASKING
AFTER ALL, I DID GET HIS TAPE PLAYER AND VIDEOS AND CDS...
AH...
GIRL THAT EVENTUALLY JOINED IN

WELL ANYWAY, LET'S KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR HIM

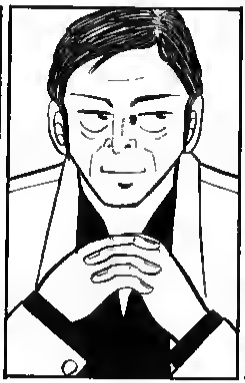
WHEW...


HEY...
DID YOU HEAR?
THREE WEEKS WENT BY.
AND THEN
HE'S YOUNG AND DOESN'T KNOW HIS LIMITS. HE'S GOING TO RUN OUT OF NOVICES TO PLAY AGAINST.
IT SOUNDS LIKE THAT BOY'S BEEN RAKING IN THE MONEY.
SURE...
YEAH...
YOU SHOULD GO CHECK ON HIM IN A BIT.
ﾓｸﾓｸ
THAT GANG'S HAVING A BIG MATCH TONIGHT, BUT...

AH...
I'M SORRY SIR, BUT WE'RE RESERVED FOR ANOTHER PARTY TONIGHT
ヰ...



回数	米田	浦川	井川	五木田
1	-16	-3	+43	-25
2	+9	-44	+57	-12
3	-39	+8	+65	-30
4				



GOOD.
I HAD THAT IN MIND, SO I'VE BEEN SETTLING UP AFTER EACH HAN-CHAN SESSION
WHY THE HELL ARE YOU HERE?
W-WAIT!
I'LL HANG ONTO IT FOR YOU
ARE YOU THINKING YOU'RE REALLY GONNA GET THE MONEY YOU'VE WON?
EVEN IF YOU WIN, IT WON'T MEAN ANYTHING IF THE MONEY CAN BE TAKEN FROM YOU BY FORCE! AM I WRONG?
YOU KNOW WHO YOU'RE PLAYING WITH.

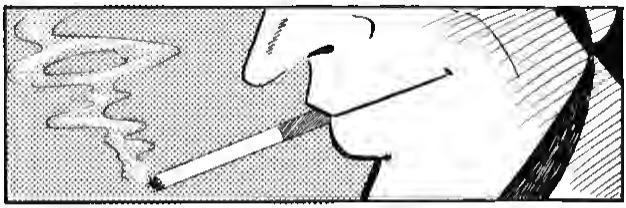
AND BY THAT TIME, I'LL MAKE SURE IT'S GONE.
IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE MONEY ON YOU, YOU WON'T GET BEAT UP. THESE YAKUZA HERE WILL COME LOOKING FOR ME
SOUTH 4TH ROUND
THAT'S HOW IT IS THEN.
I SEE.
AND I'LL JUST WIN.
MAYBE I SHOULD LEAVE SOME THINGS, OR AT LEAST THINGS LIKE THIS, TO HIM.

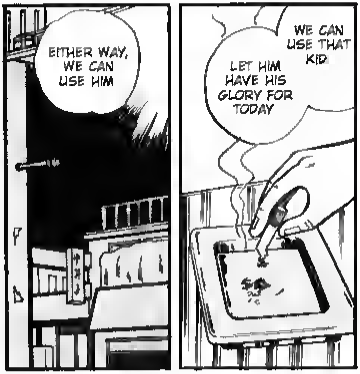
YAKUZA
OPEN TILES
DISCARDS
チラ
ピン
ツモ
ピン
ピン
TSUMO,
TAN-YAO,
CHIITOITSU.
10TH
TURN

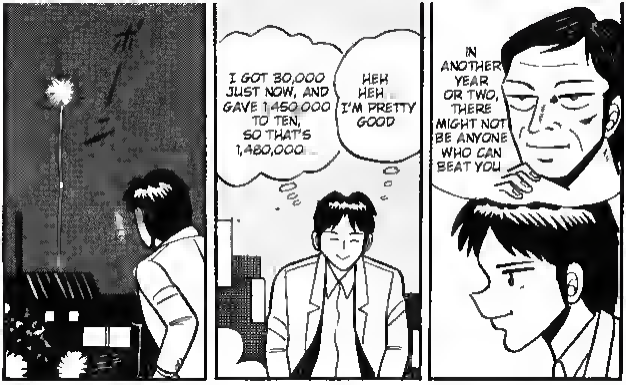
SORRY...
ミッ
ラッ
BOY...
I PROMISED I'D LEAVE AFTER THE FOURTH HAN-CHAN SESSION, SO...
カタッ
HMMMM
I HAD A BAD FEELING ABOUT THE 2-SOU.
NOT REALLY... IT JUST MEANS...
BEFORE THE 4TH TURN... WHY DID YOU KEEP THE 2-SOU AND GET RID OF THE 3-MAN...? I WOULDN'T THINK YOU'D GET RID OF IT LIKE THAT...
WOULDN'T IT BE HARDER TO DISCARD THE 3-MAN WITH THE HON-ITSU HAND I HAD?

ミャラ..
HEH HEH HEH
SAN-AN-KOU, TOI-TOI, TAN-YAO, DORA 3 A DEALER BAIMAN HAND
A GAMBLER WHO HAS A FEEL FOR THE GAME
NO, MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE YOUNG
IN ANOTHER YEAR OR TWO THERE MIGHT NOT BE ANYONE WHO CAN BEAT YOU
WELL INTO THE DOUBLE-DIGITS — YOU DID A GOOD JOB OF BEATING US
EVEN BEING ABLE TO NEATLY HOLD BACK FROM DEALING A TILE THAT WOULD NORMALLY BE DISCARDED, THAT TIME—
11P
JUST NOT LOGICAL, ARE YOU — EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE YOUNG
BE CAREFUL ON YOUR WAY HOME
I'LL BE ON MY WAY, THEN, EXCUSE ME

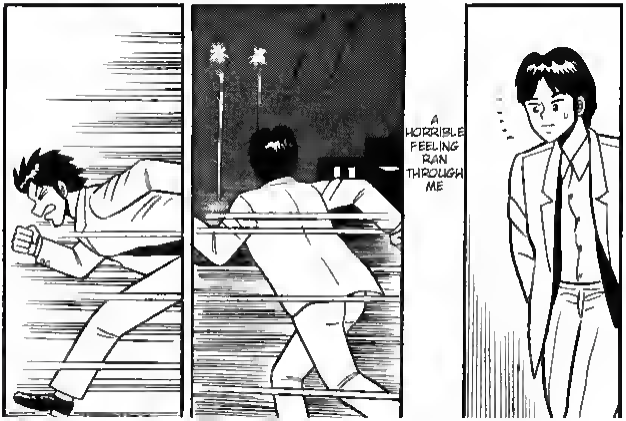
THE SCARRED MAN HE MET UP WITH HAS IT.
THE BOY DOESN'T HAVE THE MONEY ON HIM RIGHT NOW
LEAVE HIM BE...
IS IT OKAY TO JUST LET HIM GO?!
パタン・・・
静



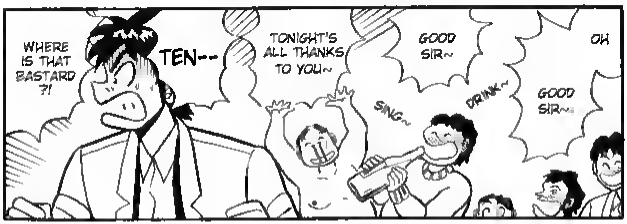

EITHER WAY, WE CAN USE HIM
WE CAN USE THAT KID
LET HIM HAVE HIS GLORY FOR TODAY

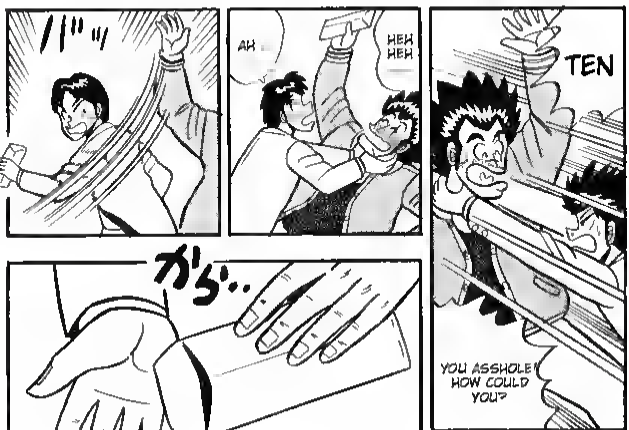

I GOT 30,000 JUST NOW, AND GAVE 1,450,000 TO TEN, SO THAT'S 1,480,000...
HEH HEH I'M PRETTY GOOD
IN ANOTHER YEAR OR TWO, THERE MIGHT NOT BE ANYONE WHO CAN BEAT YOU

HEY, IS THAT TEN'S HOUSE?
WHAT A MORON
SETTING OFF FIREWORKS AT A TIME LIKE THIS

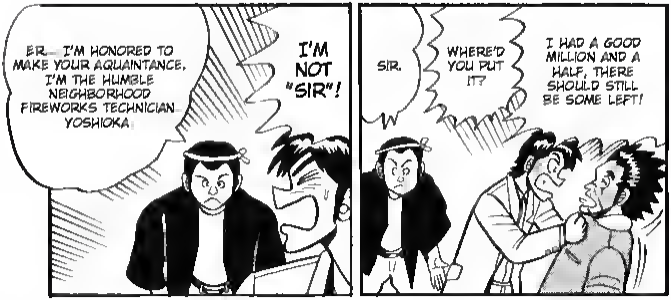

A HORRIBLE FEELING RAN THROUGH ME

ドガチャカ ドガチャカ..
/////...


WHERE IS THAT BASTARD ?!
TEN--
TONIGHT'S ALL THANKS TO YOU~
GOOD SIR~
OH
GOOD SIR~
SING~
DRINK~


AH
HEH HEH
TEN
YOU ASSHOLE! HOW COULD YOU?
から..

わぁ～っ
ヤーレン
ソーラン…


ER... I'M HONORED TO MAKE YOUR AQUAINTANCE, I'M THE HUMBLE NEIGHBORHOOD FIREWORKS TECHNICIAN YOSHIOKA.
I'M NOT "SIR"!
SIR.
WHERE'D YOU PUT IT?
I HAD A GOOD MILLION AND A HALF. THERE SHOULD STILL BE SOME LEFT!

I'M LIGHTING IT.
YOU SEE, SINCE WE GOT THE SPECIAL ORDER FOR THE ONE-SHOT MILLION-YEN SHAKU-DAMA FIREWORK, SURELY YOU'D LIKE TO WATCH IT AFTER GRACIOUSLY PAYING FOR IT, SIR.....
HUH?
ER, YOU MAY SAY SO, BUT
GO AWAY! THIS ISN'T THE TIME OR THE PLACE FOR THAT.

ヤーレニ
ソーシ
チョイ
チョイ

ヒュルルルル…
AH…

WE'LL GIVE YOU SOME BEAUTIFUL FIREWORKS!
IT'S OKAY! DON'T WORRY, PLEASE. HAVE SOME FAITH IN US TECHNICIANS!
ズ゛ズ゛ー
STOP! STOOOP!

I'M TELLING YOU~~~
STOP~~~
LISTEN TO ME~~~
UWA AAA AAA ~~
HALF CRAZED

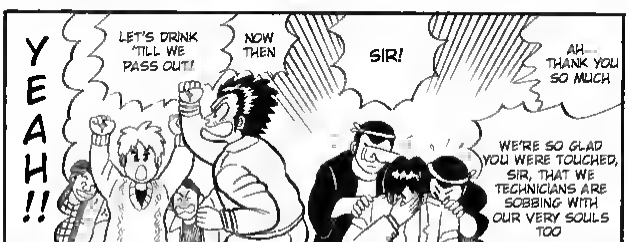
UWAAAAH! STOP IT!
LOOK OUT! LOOK OUT, SIR…

ドーン
ヤバ
あああああ
ううう

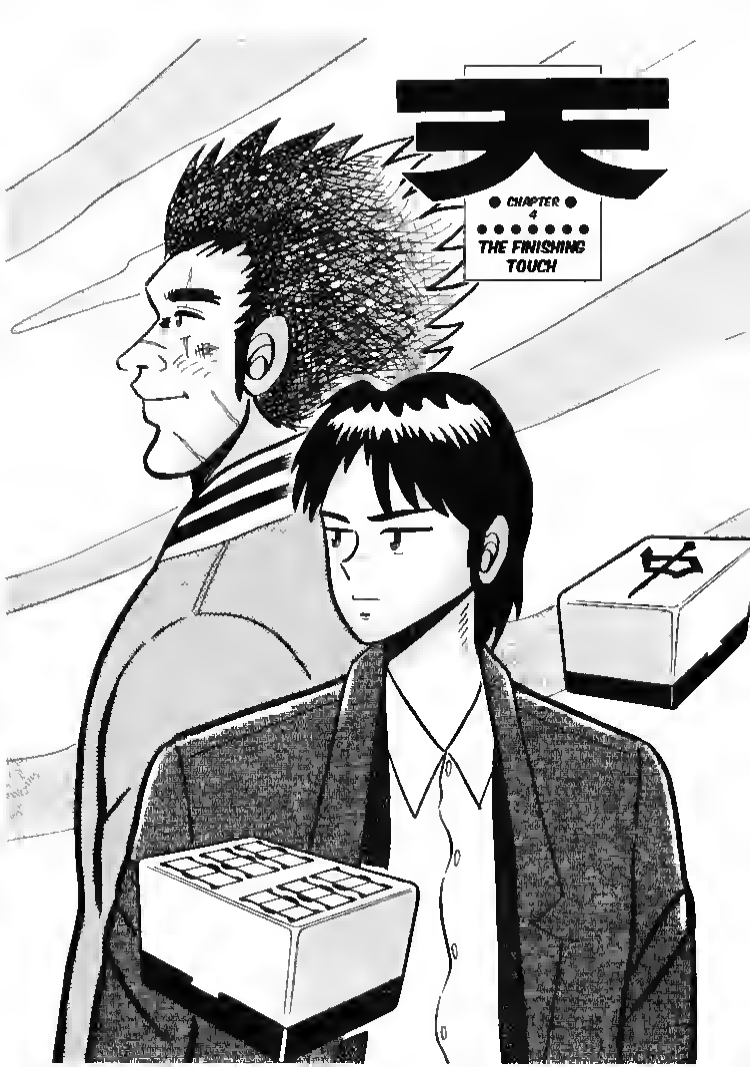
ほお
PRETTY

OH NO. HE'S JUST TOUCHED BY IT! IT'S SO RARE FOR A PERSON TO GIVE HIM A SHAKU-DAMA OF HIS OWN
WHAT'S WRONG? SIR! TEN! SIR, HE'S
ちょい…
MY MILLION GONE IN ONE KA-BOOM
A MILLION

ガク…


YEAH!!
LET'S DRINK 'TILL WE PASS OUT!!
NOW THEN
SIR!
AH… THANK YOU SO MUCH
WE'RE SO GLAD YOU WERE TOUCHED, SIR, THAT WE TECHNICIANS ARE SOBBING WITH OUR VERY SOULS TOO

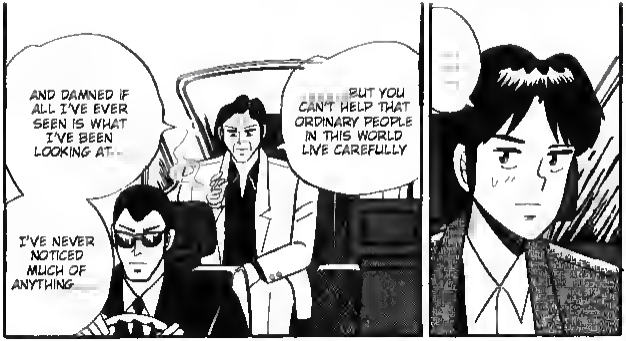
ONE MILLION, GONE IN ONE KABOOM.


CHAPTER
4
THE FINISHING
TOUCH

THE CITY IS FULL OF IDIOTS.
.....
.....
FM
NOW
キャバレー 日の丸
3F
GOODS

ブロロロロロロ・・・
WHEN THEY COME HERE...
?
THEY'RE STUPID, ALL THEY DO IS PAY ATTENTION TO THEIR HEALTH.
I JUST DON'T GET IT... EVEN WHEN THOSE USELESS GUYS ARE DOING WELL IN BODY
ALL THEY CAN DO IS BE BORED
THERE'S NO HELPING THEM.

I'M THE SAME.
NO MATTER WHAT I DO LATELY, I'M BORED...
IT'S PROOF I DON'T HAVE ANY TALENTS
SINCE THOSE WITH TALENT ARE NEVER BORED.
EVEN THE SPEED THAT THE EARTH TURNS AT!
THEY COULD GO SO FAR AS TO SEE THE INVISIBLE, LIKE GRAVITY...
THEY PAID ATTENTION TO THESE THINGS...
NEWTON, GALILEO, AND THOSE TYPES
WERE NEVER BORED


AND DAMNED IF ALL I'VE EVER SEEN IS WHAT I'VE BEEN LOOKING AT...
I'VE NEVER NOTICED MUCH OF ANYTHING...
BUT YOU CAN'T HELP THAT ORDINARY PEOPLE IN THIS WORLD LIVE CAREFULLY

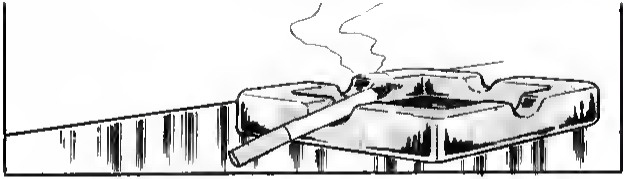
I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR EYES LIKE YOURS
WHATEVER TALENT THOSE KIND OF GUYS HAVE, THEY GO BEYOND WHAT WE NORMALLY SEE AND LOOK AT THE "THING ITSELF"
I WONDER WHICH KIND OF PERSON YOU ARE

ミッ
ミッ
YOU GET CAUTIOUS TOO
SINCE YOU WORK WITH HUNDREDS, THOUSANDS, MILLIONS IN CASH
WHEN YOU'RE THE REP PLAYER FOR A GANG
THE FINAL RESULT BUT ALSO THE GAMEPLAY
IF YOU'RE GOOD I'LL RECOMMEND YOU TO THE BOSS
I'D LIKE TO SEE A LITTLE MORE OF YOUR MAHJONG
2000 / 1000
TSUMO!!
ミッ...
IF YOU MEASURE UP TO HIM, YOU PASS
MURAISHI'S A PRETTY GOOD PLAYER

SOUTH FOURTH ROUND
キュッ
NO
HE LET IT PASS
IS HE GOING TO TAKE IT?

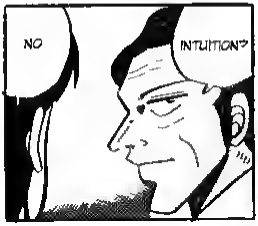
カミッ…
カミャッ
カミャッ
ビミッ
TILES TAKEN
MURAISHI'S DISCARDS
三萬
七萬
二萬
西

HIROYUKI'S HAND
THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN A SCARY TILE TO DEAL, WITH MURAISHI'S CHINITSU HAND
HMM.
THE NUMBER OF POINTS
MAKES IT AN UPSET AS OF NOW
MURAISHI HAS SECOND, HIROYUKI TAKES THE LEAD.
4000/ 2000
SORRY, I GOT TSUMO

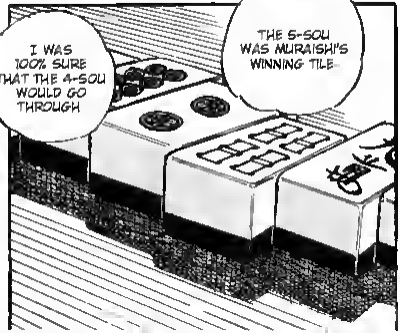


A LITTLE WHILE AGO I HAD THE FEELING MURAISHI WAS GOING TO TAKE MY 4-SOU
AND THEN RIGHT AFTER THAT YOU GAVE IT UP AND ADVANCED YOUR OWN HAND.

HE'S GOT A HARD WAY OF PLAYING, LIKE YOU.
A BIT STRANGE, ISN'T IT.
CUTTING THAT 4-SOU FROM HIS HAND

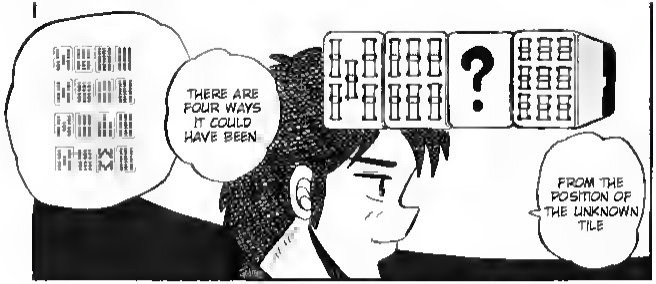

NO
INTUITION?

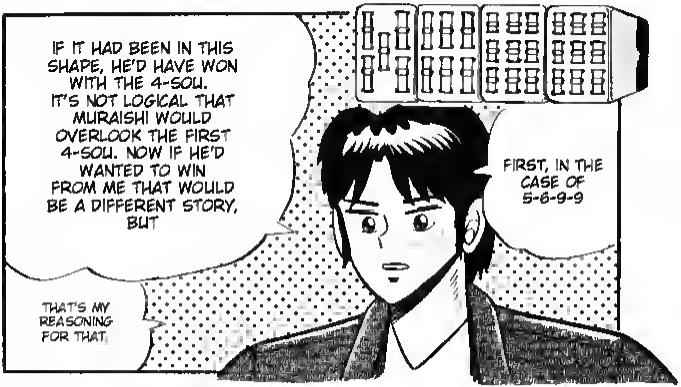
IT WOULD BE, NORMALLY
WASN'T THE 4-SOU THE HARDEST TILE TO DISCARD FROM YOUR HAND?

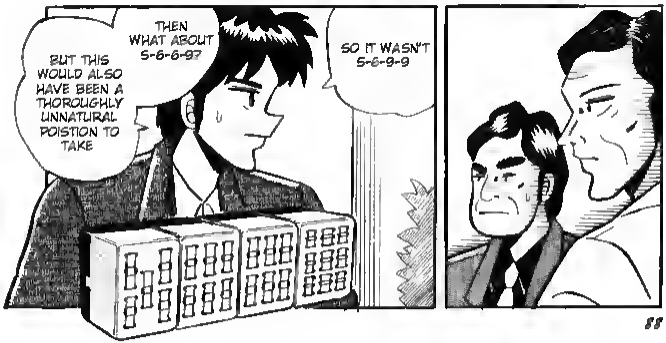

I WAS 100% SURE THAT THE 4-SOU WOULD GO THROUGH
THE 5-SOU WAS MURAISHI'S WINNING TILE

I REALIZED RIGHT AWAY...
FOR A MOMENT I HESITATED OVER WHICH TO DISCARD, THE 4-SOU OR THE 5-SOU, BUT

STEP BACK FOR A MINUTE.
THE BASIS FOR THAT WAS...
I KNEW THE WHEREABOUTS OF THREE OF THE 4-SOU TILES I HAD ONE, THERE WAS ONE ON THE TABLE, AND THERE WAS THE ONE SAWADA DISCARDED.
STARTING WITH THE HUNCH THAT HE WOULD TAKE THE 4-SOU.
WELL, IT'S A BIT LONG, BUT I'LL TAKE IT STEP BY STEP.
SO IT WASN'T A PON ON THE 4-SOU.
AND DISCARDED THE 9-SOU.
MURAISHI DREW A TILE.
I WAS USING THREE OF THE 3-SOU AND BECAUSE MURAISHI HAD DISCARDED A 3-SOU, THERE WERE NONE LEFT.
IT ALSO WASN'T A LOWER-END CHI (WITH THE 2-SOU AND 3-SOU) OR A MIDDLE WAIT CHI (WITH THE 3-SOU AND 5-SOU).
THINKING ON IT, HE COULD ONLY MAKE A 5-SOU AND 6-SOU CHI.
5-SOU, 6-SOU, ?, AND 9-SOU.
?
IN SHORT, THE WAY HIS HAND LOOKED BEFORE HE DREW WAS


THERE ARE FOUR WAYS IT COULD HAVE BEEN
?
FROM THE POSITION OF THE UNKNOWN TILE


IF IT HAD BEEN IN THIS SHAPE, HE'D HAVE WON WITH THE 4-SOU. IT'S NOT LOGICAL THAT MURAISHI WOULD OVERLOOK THE FIRST 4-SOU. NOW IF HE'D WANTED TO WIN FROM ME THAT WOULD BE A DIFFERENT STORY, BUT
FIRST, IN THE CASE OF 5-6-9-9
THAT'S MY REASONING FOR THAT.


BUT THIS WOULD ALSO HAVE BEEN A THOROUGHLY UNNATURAL POISITION TO TAKE
THEN WHAT ABOUT 5-6-6-9?
SO IT WASN'T 5-6-9-9

THERE'S NO WAY HE'D BREAK UP HIS TENPAI AND DEAL THE 3-SOU
AT THAT POINT IN TIME, MURAISHI WOULD HAVE HAD 3-5-6-6-9
IF IT HAD BEEN 5-6-6-9
MURAISHI HAD DISCARDED THE 3-SOU THREE TURNS BEFORE HE DISCARDED THE 9-SOU
BUT I DON'T KNOW WHY THAT WOULD HAVE MADE HIM THINK ABOUT TAKING THE 4-SOU A MOMENT AGO
WHAT ABOUT 5-6-7-9
IT WASN'T 5-6-6-9 EITHER
THE SHAPE 5-6-8-9
ONLY ONE REMAINS
HE BEGAN WITH THE TILES 5-6-8-9
THAT'S HOW I THOUGHT IT THROUGH
WHATEVER MURAISHI DREW
AS SOON AS HE DREW, HE WOULD HAVE GONE FOR A TWO-SIDED WAIT
5-6-7-9 WOULD ALREADY BE IN TENPAI WITH A SINGLE TILE WAIT
TAKING MY TILE WOULD HAVE PUT HIM INTO A SINGLE WAIT
IT WASN'T THE HESITATION OF 'SHOULD I TAKE IT OR NOT'

IT MAKES SENSE SO FAR.
HE'S GOT IT RIGHT.

YEAH

IS HE RIGHT SO FAR?
MUIRA

DRAW THE 7-SOU AND WITH 5-6-7-8-9 DISCARD THE 9-SOU (WAITING ON 5 OR 8) OR DRAW THE 8-SOU AND WITH 5-6-8-8-9 DISCARD THE 9-SOU (WAITING ON 4 OR 7).
DISCARDING THE 9 FROM 5-6-8-9 COULD BE EITHER OF TWO THINGS
THERE ISN'T ANY WAY TO FIGURE THAT PART OUT...

BUT IT'S A BIT HARD TO REASON OUT, ISN'T IT?

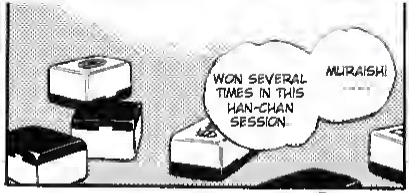
WITH THOSE TWO THINGS HOW DID YOU KNOW WHETHER THE TILE I DREW WAS A 7-SOU OR AN 8-SOU
AND WITH THE TILES I DISCARDED
WITH THE WAY THE TILES LAY

IT WAS LOGIC ALL THE WAY TO THE END
NO...

THE LAST BIT MUST HAVE BEEN YOUR OWN INTUITION?
WHAT MURA SAID IS TRUE...

LET'S HEAR IT.
YOU WAY OF FIGURING THINGS OUT SOUNDS INTERESTING

THIS IS INTERESTING
HA HA HA


MURAISHI
WON SEVERAL TIMES IN THIS HAN-CHAN SESSION.

AT THOSE TIMES
THERE WAS SOMETHING I NOTICED.

カニカッ…
ピニッ

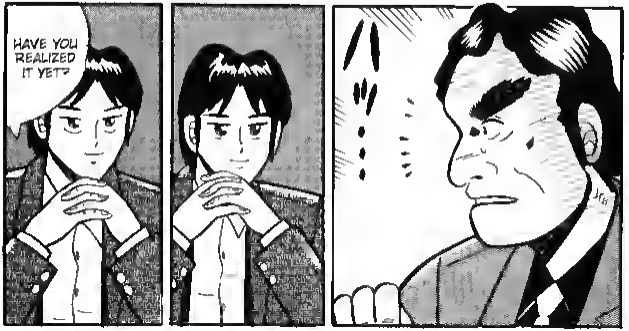
カニカッ…

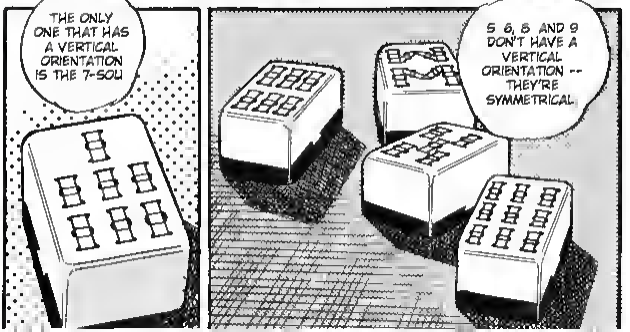
…

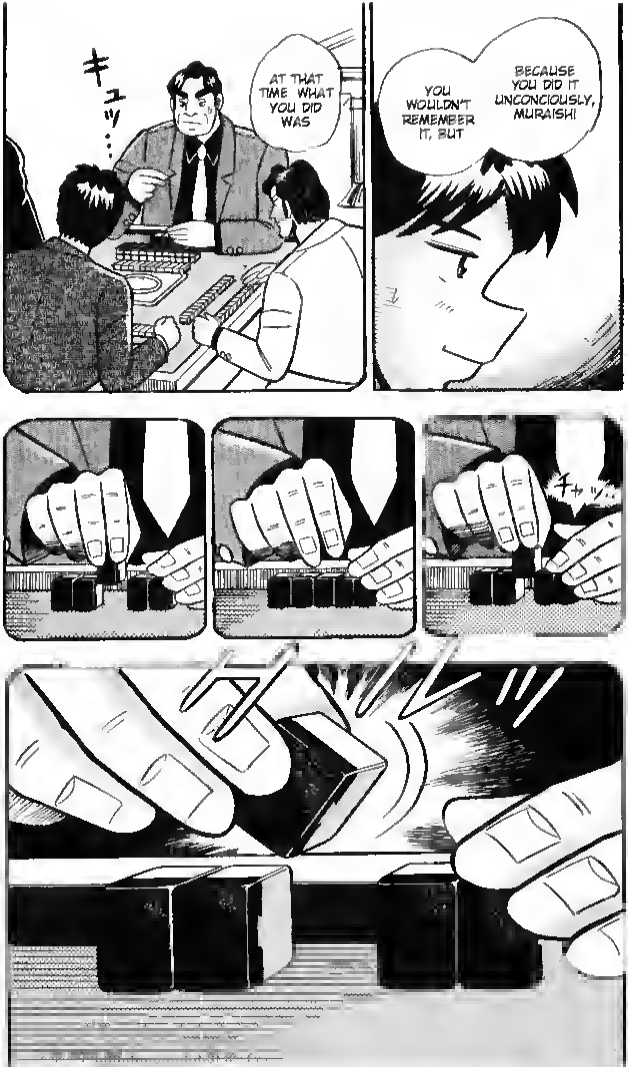
ALWAYS.
HE ARRANGED THE WINNING TILE NEATLY IN THE PROPER DIRECTION
ピニッ
カニッ

PLEASE LOOK CLOSELY.
THE 7-SOU IS SPECIAL AMONG THESE TILES.
?
?
AHA.
AH.....
I'LL SEPERATE IT OUT.

HEH HEH HEH ...
HAHAHA! THAT'S RIGHT! THAT'S RIGHT!


HAVE YOU REALIZED IT YET?
!!
...


THE ONLY ONE THAT HAS A VERTICAL ORIENTATION IS THE 7-SOU.
5, 6, 8 AND 9 DON'T HAVE A VERTICAL ORIENTATION -- THEY'RE SYMMETRICAL.


キュッ…
AT THAT TIME WHAT YOU DID WAS
YOU WOULDN'T REMEMBER IT, BUT
BECAUSE YOU DID IT UNCONCIOUSLY, MURAISHI
チャリ…

IT WAS LIKE I COULD SEE RIGHT THROUGH THAT TILE
.....

I DISCARDED THE 4-SOU WITH 100% CONFIDENCE THAT IT WOULD GO THROUGH.
FROM THAT HAND... BY DISCARDING THE 9-SOU, YOU WERE WAITING ON A 5 OR 8.

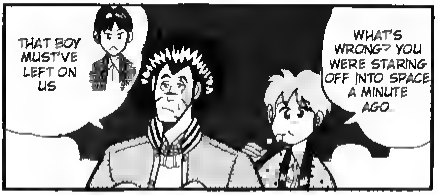
HA HA HA

HEH
HEH
HEH

DON'T GET SO UPSET OVER IT
WELL... MURA
CHEER UP.

ガタ!!

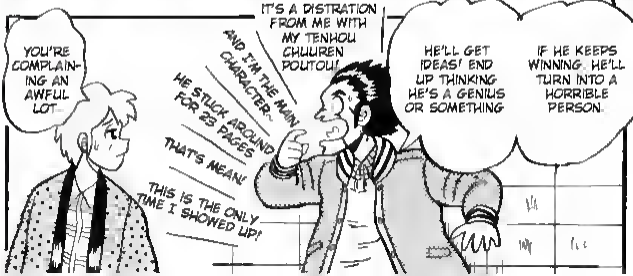
HEH HEH HEH
NO I'M NOT, REALLY...
YOU'VE GOT A GOOD EYE JUST LIKE I FIGURED YOU DID
A RATHER INTERESTING ONE
YOU'RE
COME WITH ME...
LET'S GO MAKE SOME MONEY!


THAT BOY MUST'VE LEFT ON US
WHAT'S WRONG? YOU WERE STARING OFF INTO SPACE A MINUTE AGO.

TEN...

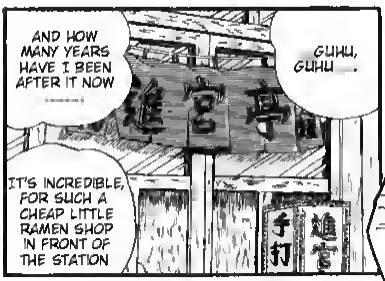
THAT'S DANGEROUS, GET BACK HERE!
HE'LL BE FINE HE'S GOOD AT MAHJONG SO HE'LL SURVIVE.

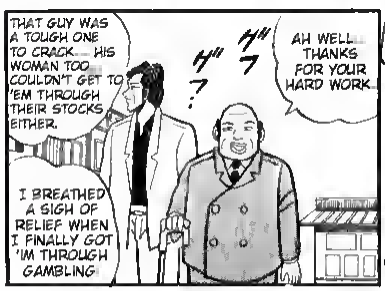
THAT'S REALLY THE REASON?
THAT'S BECAUSE YOU SPENT HIS ¥500,000 YEN WITHOUT ASKING.

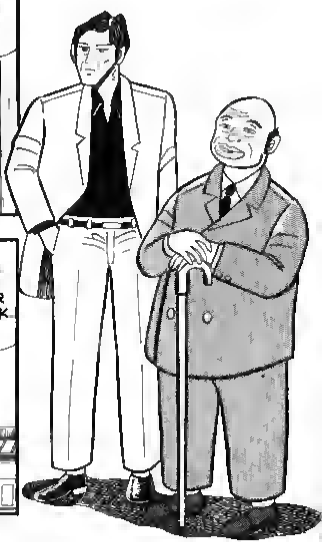

YOU'RE COMPLAINING AN AWFUL LOT.
IT'S A DISTRACTION FROM ME WITH MY TENHOU CHUUREN POUTOU!
AND I'M THE MAIN CHARACTER.
HE STUCK AROUND FOR 23 PAGES
THAT'S MEAN!
THIS IS THE ONLY TIME I SHOWED UP!
HE'LL GET IDEAS! END UP THINKING HE'S A GENIUS OR SOMETHING
IF HE KEEPS WINNING, HE'LL TURN INTO A HORRIBLE PERSON.

CHAPTER
5
SELF-RELIANCE

IT'S A GOOD PIECE OF PROPERTY.....
.....


AND HOW MANY YEARS HAVE I BEEN AFTER IT NOW .....
GUHU, GUHU....
IT'S INCREDIBLE, FOR SUCH A CHEAP LITTLE RAMEN SHOP IN FRONT OF THE STATION
進宮亭
手打
進宮


THAT GUY WAS A TOUGH ONE TO CRACK... HIS WOMAN TOO COULDN'T GET TO 'EM THROUGH THEIR STOCKS EITHER.
I BREATHED A SIGH OF RELIEF WHEN I FINALLY GOT 'IM THROUGH GAMBLING
AH WELL... THANKS FOR YOUR HARD WORK...
ゲ〃ゲ
ゲ〃?

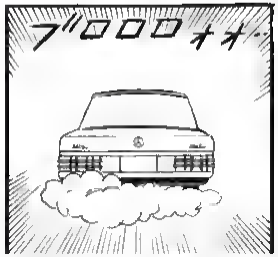


THE TRICK TO THIS JOB IS GETTING CONTROL OF EVEN JUST A HALF.
NOW, I HAVE HALF HIS HOME AND LAND.

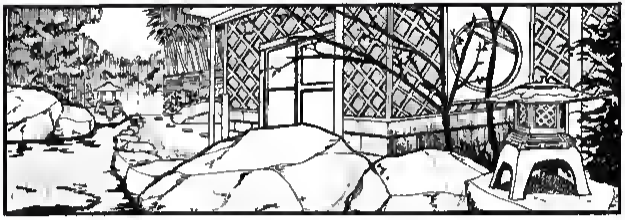
IT MADE HIM BURN THROUGH THE MONEY HE GOT FROM LOANS IN THREE MONTHS.
I PAID UP THOSE LOANS FOR HIM.
グフフ…
GUHU, GUHU HE WORSHIPPED ME, BRIEFLY, GUHU……

THAT REMAINING HALF
WILL BE DEALT WITH IN TODAY'S MAHJONG GAME.
HE'S PROBABLY THINKING HE WANTS TO GET IT BACK, TOO.

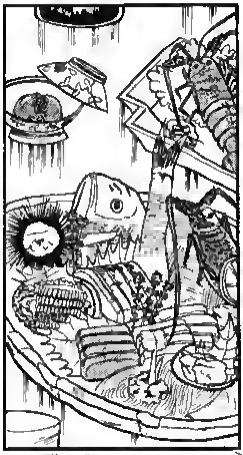
I'LL SOON HAVE DOUBLE OR TRIPLE THE PROFIT MARGIN.
グフ
グフ…
EVEN THOUGH IT TAKES TIME IF IT MAKES THAT PROPERTY ROLL ITS WAY INTO MY HANDS

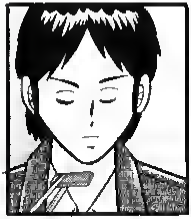

ブロロロォォ…

LET'S GO, HIROYUKI



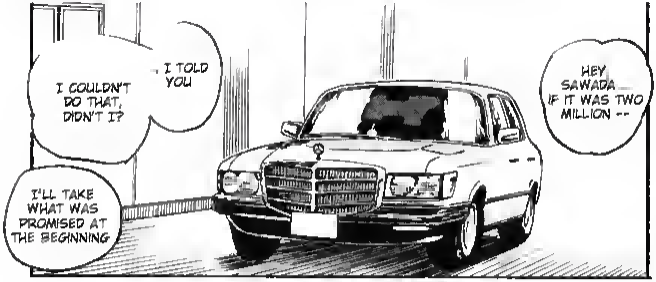
ウ!!!
ウ!!!
ウ!!!
ウ!!!

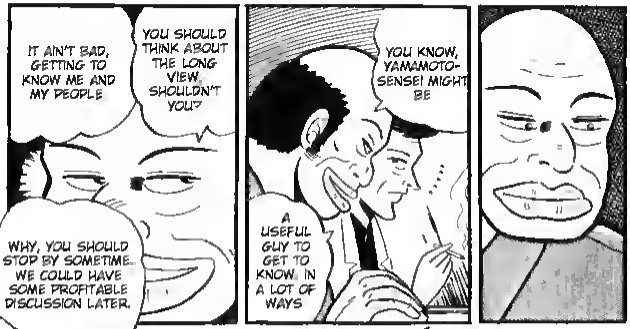


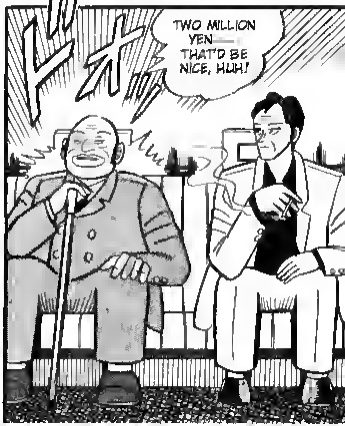


THERE'S NO WAY HIROYUKI WILL LOSE TO A NOVICE
THIS KID IS HE GONNA BE OKAY FOR THE MATCH TODAY?
BY THE WAY, SAWADA

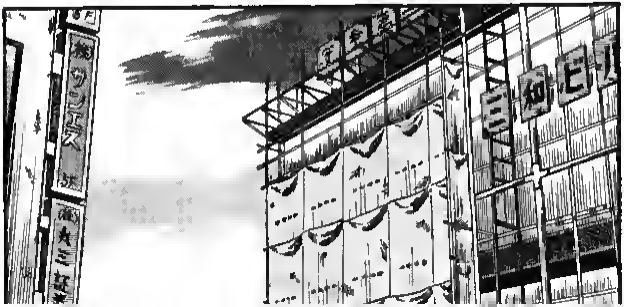
WON'T LOSE
HIROYUKI...
HE MIGHT'VE GOTTEN A REP PLAYER TOO...
WELL, AS LONG AS HE WINS I'VE INVESTED A FAIR BIT OF MONEY INTO THIS ALREADY...
PAYING UP THE LAWYERS AND OUR MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT YAMAMOTO-SENSEI FROM 3-KU...
GUHA GUHA
YOU'RE NOT SUCH A BAD GUY...
WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT MORE, YOU'RE REALLY THE BEST, SAWADA...
GUHAHAHA, WELL NO MATTER...
YA GOT THE PLACE READY AND SET UP THE MEETING AND WHEN YOU WIN, I'LL BRING THE FIVE MILLION YEN OVER
LIKES HIS FILIPINO WOMEN...
HE STILL...
GUHU GUHU...


I TOLD YOU
I COULDN'T DO THAT, DIDN'T I?
I'LL TAKE WHAT WAS PROMISED AT THE BEGINNING
HEY SAWADA... IF IT WAS TWO MILLION --


IT AIN'T BAD, GETTING TO KNOW ME AND MY PEOPLE
YOU SHOULD THINK ABOUT THE LONG VIEW, SHOULDN'T YOU?
WHY, YOU SHOULD STOP BY SOMETIME... WE COULD HAVE SOME PROFITABLE DISCUSSION LATER.
YOU KNOW, YAMAMOTO-SENSEI MIGHT BE
A USEFUL GUY TO GET TO KNOW, IN A LOT OF WAYS


TWO MILLION YEN—— THAT'D BE NICE, HUH!

HEY. HEAD OVER TO THAT BUILDING ON THE CORNER OVER THERE
YESSIR!
UWAAA, OW, OW!



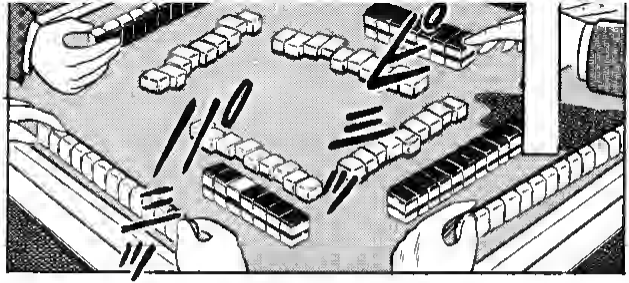
WHA...
WHAT'S WRONG, SAWADA
I'LL STAB YOU...
YOU PIECE OF SHIT!
WITH YAMAMOTO BEHIND YOU YOU MIGHT THINK YOU'RE TOUGH BUT
WHEN IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO DIE, YOU'RE GONNA DIE.

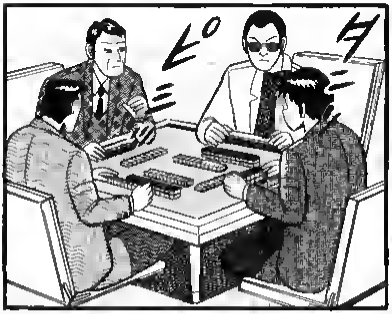
DON'T REFUSE ME! DON'T JUST TWITTER AWAY IN FRONT OF ME!
IF YOU DON'T WANT ME TO RUN YOU OVER
SHOULD I RUN YOU OVER WITH THE CAR RIGHT NOW?
EEP!
REMEMBER THAT! YOU FUCKING PIG!
ALL YOU'VE GOT ARE CONNECTIONS TO MONEY!!
ドカッ
GET OUT OF HERE.
YESSIR!
ブロロロォォ..

YEAH
YOU LIVE BY YOURSELF?
FOR A WIFE AND KID A LONG TIME AGO.
I RAN OUT OF PATIENCE
NO THANKS...
WANT A DRINK...?
I'D BEEN GETTING IRRATIONALLY PISSED OFF AT HIM FROM THE START.
I WAS REALLY RELIEVED BACK THERE
OH, THAT?

ARE TRASH, BUT
RIGHT NOW, THEY'VE GOT THE MOST POWER.
THAT LOT
THAT'S JUSTICE FOR YOU. MAKES SURE THEY DON'T GET THEIR HANDS DIRTY
AND THEN THEY'VE ALWAYS GOT CONNECTIONS WITH THE LAW...
THEY'RE GARBAGE!
OF COURSE THEY DO WELL
THAT'S WHAT THEY AND THEIR BUDDIES MESS AROUND WITH
LAND AND THINGS THAT AREN'T ANYBODY'S
GETTING AN INCREDIBLE AMOUNT OF CASH OUT OF IT.
MY TASTES ARE TOO OLD-FASHIONED
RIGHT NOW IS THE TIME FOR THOSE WRETCHES
I HAVE TO GO ALONG WITH THEM
WE'VE ALL GOT TO TAKE SHELTER WHERE WE CAN...
BUT, Y'KNOW
EVEN GOING SO FAR AS TO PROTECT GUYS LIKE THAT
IN THIS WORLD OF OURS
///

EVEN THOUGH I'VE GOTTEN OLD
SOMEWHERE INSIDE
AH, THOSE DAYS
IT WAS SUCH AN OVER-EXAGGERATED FANTASY
BUT
THE MAIN CHARACTER, WEARING ONLY A KIMONO, TURNED TOWARDS THE PLACE HE WAS BOUND TO DIE, ALONE...
YOU KNOW THE YAKUZA IN THOSE OLD TOEI MOVIES?
UH? NO...
BACK WHEN WE WERE YOUNG. OUR HEARTS RACED IN THE DARKNESS OF THE MOVIE THEATER.
I GUESS I WAS STILL THINKNG I WANTED TO LIVE LIKE THEY DID IN THE MOVIES.

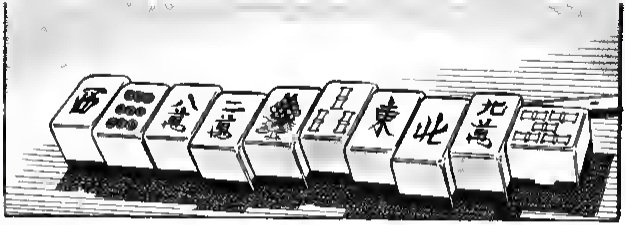


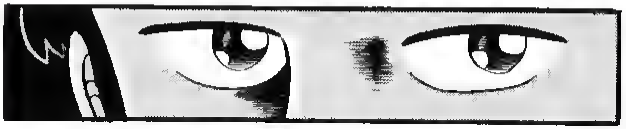


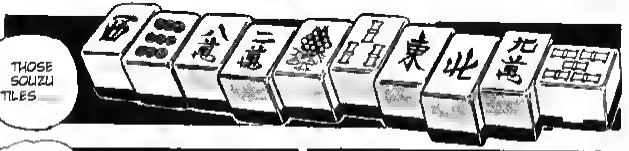
IF I'D HEARD YOU'D BE COMING, I'D HAVE COME TO GREET...
B BOSS
WHY IT WAS JUST ON A WHIM

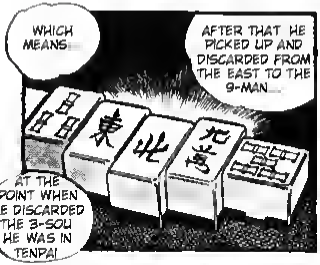
SAWADA

I'D LIKE TO HAVE A LOOK AT...
WHICH IS WHO
Y YES, WELL
I HEARD YOU FOUND A GOOD KID...
RICHI!
HIROYUKI'S HAND
THE PROBLEM IS THE RICHI FROM THE PLAYER OPPOSITE ME
I'M IN TENPAI... IF I DISCARD THE 9-SOU, I'LL BE WAITING ON THE 6-PIN OR 9-PIN BUT...



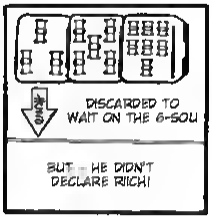


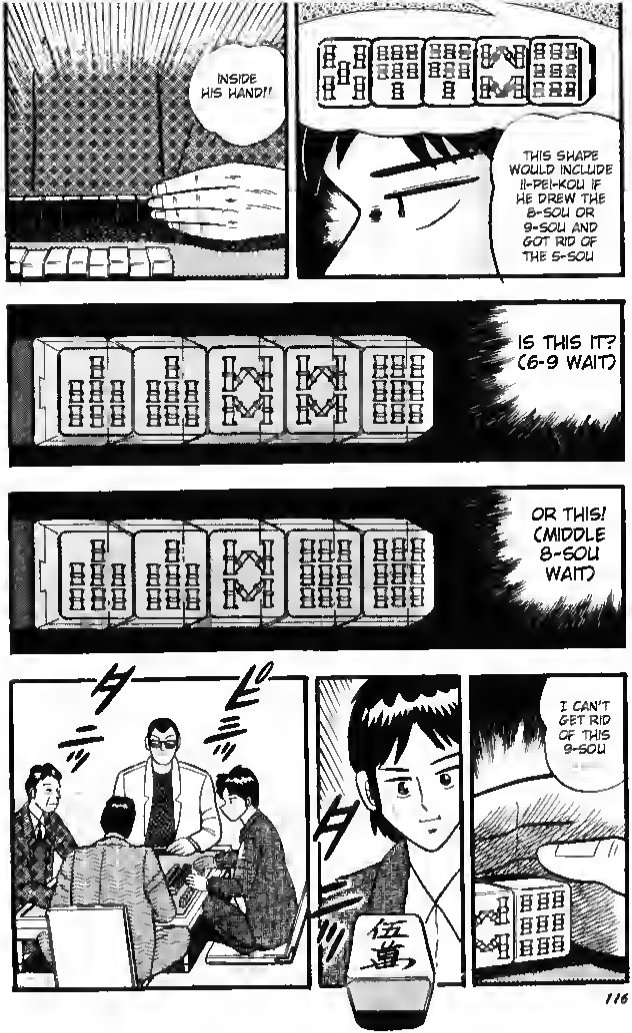

THOSE SOUZU TILES...


WHICH MEANS...
AFTER THAT HE PICKED UP AND DISCARDED FROM THE EAST TO THE 9-MAN...
AT THE POINT WHEN HE DISCARDED THE 3-SOU HE WAS IN TENPAI

SO HE COULDN'T GET RID OF THE 5-SOU...
HE HAD THE 5-SOU AND 7-SOU
1-SOU, 3-SOU, 5-SOU ALTHOUGH HE EASILY DISCARDED THE 1-SOU AND 3-SOU, HE LEFT DISCARDING THE 5-SOU UNTIL THE END

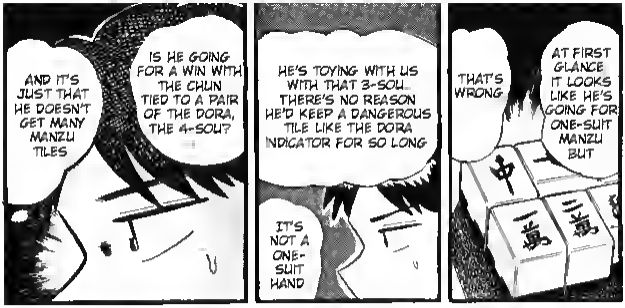
MORE THAN ANYTHING! RATHER THAN CHANGE IT TO A TWO-SIDED WAIT
HE WANTED TO HANG ONTO THE 7-SOU
IT MUST BE TIED TO HIS YAKU...

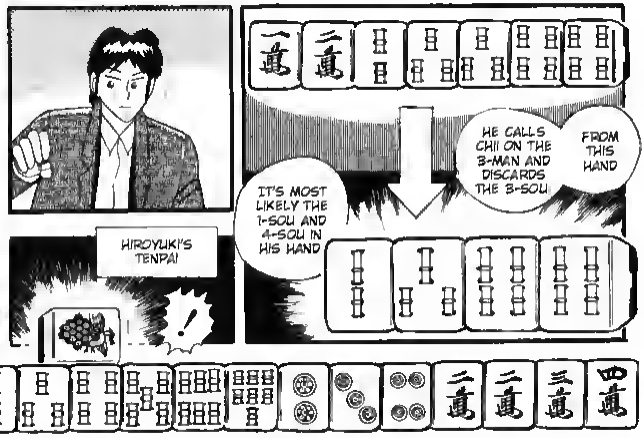

DISCARDED TO WAIT ON THE 6-SOU
BUT... HE DIDN'T DECLARE RICHI!

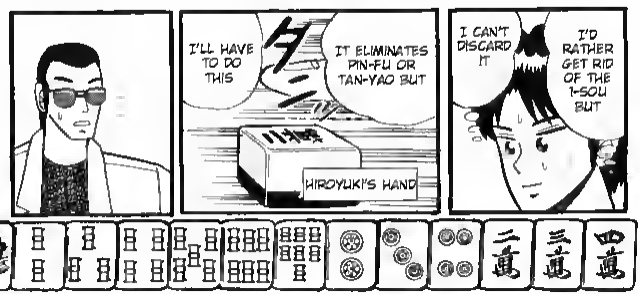

INSIDE HIS HAND!!
THIS SHAPE WOULD INCLUDE II-PEI-KOU IF HE DREW THE 8-SOU OR 9-SOU AND GOT RID OF THE 5-SOU
IS THIS IT? (6-9 WAIT)
OR THIS! (MIDDLE 8-SOU WAIT)
I CAN'T GET RID OF THIS 9-SOU

RON.
ニヤァ
ピシッ
三萬
四萬
伍萬
キュッ
NEXT ROUND
HM...

カミツ
CHII.
I'LL HOLD OFF ON DECLARING RIICHI FOR NOW.
IT'S A BIT TOUGH...
I'M IN TENPAI, BUT THERE'S A SLIM CHANCE OF GETTING IT WITH MY SANSHOKU...
OPENED TILES
DISCARDS
カミツ
THAT 3-SOU


AND IT'S JUST THAT HE DOESN'T GET MANY MANZU TILES
IS HE GOING FOR A WIN WITH THE CHUN TIED TO A PAIR OF THE DORA, THE 4-SOU?
HE'S TOYING WITH US WITH THAT 3-SOU... THERE'S NO REASON HE'D KEEP A DANGEROUS TILE LIKE THE DORA INDICATOR FOR SO LONG
IT'S NOT A ONE-SUIT HAND
THAT'S WRONG
AT FIRST GLANCE IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S GOING FOR ONE-SUIT MANZU BUT


HE CALLS CHII ON THE 3-MAN AND DISCARDS THE 3-SOU
FROM THIS HAND
IT'S MOST LIKELY THE 1-SOU AND 4-SOU IN HIS HAND
HIROYUKI'S TENPAI

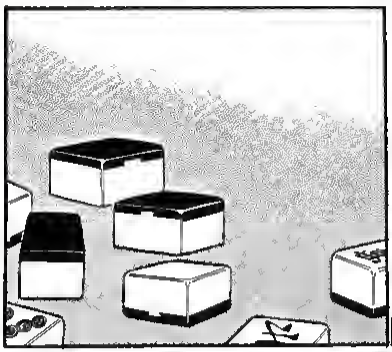

I'LL HAVE TO DO THIS
IT ELIMINATES PIN-FU OR TAN-YAO BUT
HIROYUKI'S HAND
I CAN'T DISCARD IT
I'D RATHER GET RID OF THE 1-SOU BUT

RIIGH! IF IT GOES THROUGH!
カチャ…
カチャ…
I WONDER IF HE'S FIGURED IT OUT…
CARELESSLY DROPPING A MANZU TILE…
HUH?
SORRY.
RO-RON!
SAN-SHOKU, ATAMA-HANE.

THAT BOY'S AN INTERESTING ONE.
TAKE GOOD CARE OF HIM.
YESSIR!

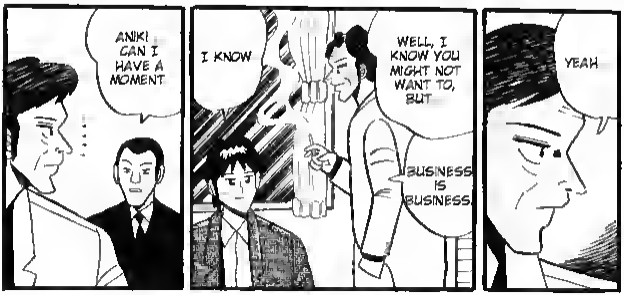
HEH HEH HEH, SORRY FOR BARGING IN, SAWADA

HM...



WE CAN KEEP USING HIM.
TO LAY OUR GOLDEN EGGS.

THE CLIENT FOR THAT LAND SHARK, RIGHT...
WELL... I NEED YOU TO HOLD OUT FOR ONE MORE SESSION, SINCE THE NEXT CLIENT IS THE GUY WE'RE REALLY AFTER TODAY...
NO...
ARE YOU TIRED?

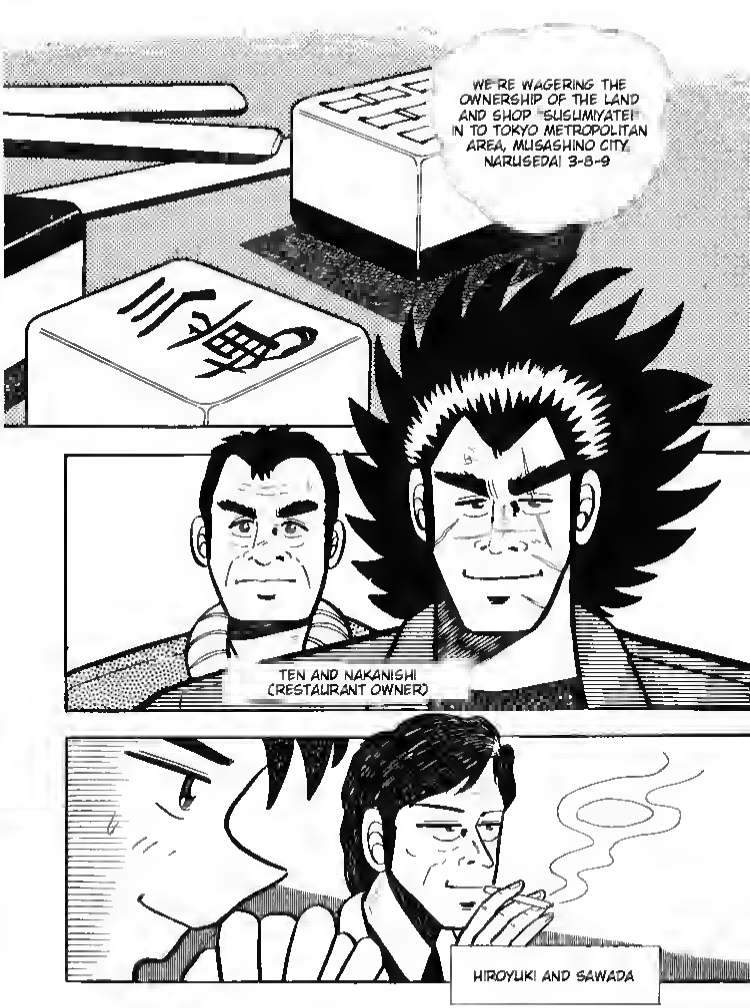

ANIKI CAN I HAVE A MOMENT
I KNOW
WELL, I KNOW YOU MIGHT NOT WANT TO, BUT...
BUSINESS IS BUSINESS
YEAH

THAT OLD GUY FROM THE RAMEN SHOP FOUND SOMEONE IN A SINGLE DAY.....?
A REP PLAYER .....?
YEAH...

GET THE MONEY OUTTA HERE!
IT COULD BE A COP OR AN INFORMER!
.....
WELL... WE'RE BEING RECKLESS BUT...
SURE...
PLEASE, THIS WAY.
YESSIR.
LET HIM IN!

.....
.....
...I KNOW I'VE SEEN YOU BEFORE .....
HEH HEH, SORRY FOR BUTTING IN

天
CHAPTER 6
PREPARING FOR ACTION


WE'RE WAGERING THE OWNERSHIP OF THE LAND AND SHOP "SUSUMIYATEI" IN TO TOKYO METROPOLITAN AREA, MUSASHINO CITY, NARUSEDAI 3-8-9
TEN AND NAKANISHI (RESTAURANT OWNER)
HIROYUKI AND SAWADA

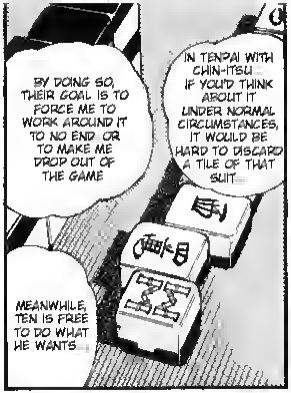
THE GAMES WILL BE SETTLED BY ADDING UP THE NUMBER OF POINTS SCORED BY EACH TEAM AT THE END OF EACH HAN-CHAN SESSION.
THE MATCH WILL BE FIVE HAN-CHAN SESSIONS. WHICHEVER SIDE IS THE FIRST TO WIN THREE GAMES, WINS.
TEN'S ONLY CHANCE AT VICTORY IS TSUBAME-GAESHI CHUUREN POUTOU
THERE'S NO WAY WE'LL LOSE TO TEN'S SIDE IF THERE'S NO TRICKS INVOLVED...
I WONDER IF TEN WILL HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT THOSE RULES...
HEH HEH...
THAT SHOULD DO... RGHT...?
CAN I MAKE A SUGGES-TION?
HERE IT COMES...
THAT ONE-SHOT COMEBACK WON'T WORK WITH THE WAY IT'S SPLIT UP INTO FIVE HAN-CHAN SESSIONS. HE'LL PROBABLY WANT TO PLAY BY ADDING UP THE TOTAL POINT FROM ALL FIVE SESSIONS

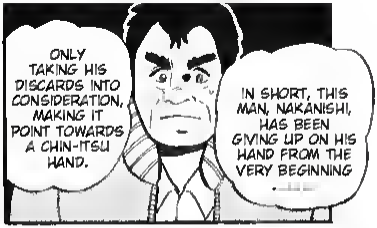
I'M FINE WITH THE FIVE HAN-CHAN SESSIONS, BUT NOT WITH TEAMS
I'D LIKE IT TO BE BETWEEN ME AND HIROYUKI.
I DON'T REALLY MIND...
SURE
HIROYUKI WHAT DO YOU THINK?
SURELY HE CAN'T WIN THAT WAY, CAN HE?
FIVE HAN-CHAN SESSIONS AGAINST ME ...!?
WHAT'S HE PLOTTING

YES SIR
GO HANG OUT IN THE ROOM BELOW US
THAT'S IT FOR YOU GUYS FOR TODAY
NOW COME ON, YOU GUYS WHO AREN'T PLAYING, GET OUT OF HERE
THIS MIGHT BE SHADY BUSINESS, BUT WE CAN'T HAVE YOU CROWDING AROUND AND GIVING IT A BAD ATMOSPHERE
NO PROBLEM
HEH HEH SORRY, BUT JUST IN CASE
NO MATTER HOW MUCH I THINK ABOUT IT, THERE'S NO WAY HE CAN TAKE ME IN THREE OUT OF FIVE GAMES IS THERE?
WITH NO TRICKS, THERE'S NO WAY I'D HAVE ANY PROBLEM WINNING AGAINST HIM
WHY...? I KNOW HOW GOOD TEN IS AT MAHJONG..
I'VE PLAYED AGAINST HIM AND WATCHED HIS GAMES BEFORE
THAT'S WAY TOO RECKLESS
THEY WOULDN'T HESITATE TO BEAT THE HELL OUT OF HIM
HE COULDN'T POSSIBLY GO FOR CHUUREN POUTOU THREE TIMES

CHII!
EAST 1ST ROUND
NAKANISHI'S DISCARDS
UH
A CHIN-ITSU MANZU HAND...?
HE'S ALREADY GOT SO MANY IN HIS HAND THAT HE'S DISCARDING THEM?
WHAT...
HIROYUKI'S HAND

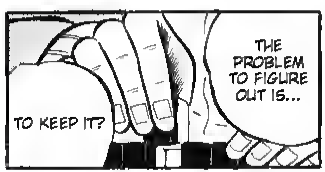
HUH?
TENPAI.
NO-TEN.
EAST 1ST ROUND: DRAW
HANG ON THE 7-MAN, THE DORA, IS GONNA BE HARD TO DISCARD
AHAAAA.....
.....
.....
.....
NAKA-NISHI'S DISCARDS
6TH TURN
OF COURSE
I GET THE GENERAL IDEA. I KNOW WHAT THEY'RE AIMING FOR.
EAST 2ND ROUND
THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE I'M RIGHT.
I'M SURE OF IT.


IN TENPAI WITH CHIN-ITSU IF YOU'D THINK ABOUT IT UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES, IT WOULD BE HARD TO DISCARD A TILE OF THAT SUIT
BY DOING SO, THEIR GOAL IS TO FORCE ME TO WORK AROUND IT TO NO END. OR TO MAKE ME DROP OUT OF THE GAME
MEANWHILE, TEN IS FREE TO DO WHAT HE WANTS...


ONLY TAKING HIS DISCARDS INTO CONSIDERATION, MAKING IT POINT TOWARDS A CHIN-ITSU HAND.
IN SHORT, THIS MAN, NAKANISHI, HAS BEEN GIVING UP ON HIS HAND FROM THE VERY BEGINNING

ON THE SEVENTH OR EIGHTH TURN HE PUT OUT A TILE OR TWO FROM THAT SUIT

I'D LIKE IT TO BE BETWEEN ME AND HIROYUKI...


THE PROBLEM TO FIGURE OUT IS...
TO KEEP IT?

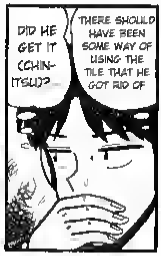
OR TO NOT KEEP IT?.....

IT'S JUST... WHEN I'VE GOT VALID CONCERNS, WILL I BE ABLE TO PUT TOGETHER A HAND...
I WASN'T AFRAID AT ALL... THINKING IT WAS A BLUFF, BUT .....
SO THAT'S WHAT THAT WAS...

SOUTH 3RD ROUND
GOOD GOING, OLD FELLA.
キュッ
THIS WAY OF DOING THING WILL BE REVEALED SOON, ANYWAY
BUT
THE REAL MATCH WILL BE AFTER THAT
NAKANISHI'S DISCARDS
IT'S JUST THAT HIROYUKI KID IS REALLY GOOD
I CAN'T DO IT ALONE, I'LL NEED YOUR COOPERATION, OLD FELLA
THE PREVIOUS EVENING
OH GEEZ... IT'S NOT THAT I CAN'T TAKE THE JOB OF BEING YOUR RED PLAYER BUT...
P... PLEASE TEN M'BOY
OLD FELLA...
STILL, WE'LL RUFFLE HIM WITH LITTLE TRICKS AND HE'LL LOSE HIS NERVE...
YOU GOT YOUR LAND AND SHOP BY BEING SERIOUS AND STRAIGHT-FORWARD.
YOU'RE JUST BARELY GETTING BY, AREN'T YOU.
BUT, Y'SEE...

IF YOU CAN'T DO THAT FOR ONCE IN YOUR LIFE, YOU'LL LOSE THIS GAME OF MAHJONG
OLD FELLA, YOU...
IF YOU DON'T WANT YOUR LAND AND HOME STOLEN AWAY.
THAT'S NO GOOD FOR MAHJONG TOMORROW
DON'T LET HIM CATCH A SINGLE HINT OF IT.
BET YOUR LIFE ON THE TILES YOU DISCARD
IF YOU DON'T GO THAT FAR, WE WON'T FOOL HIS EYES.
PUT YOUR HEART INTO PLAYING OUTSIDE THE BOX
NAKAISHI'S DISCARDS
GIVE UP ON SMALL TRICKS AND TECHNIQUES
YOUR FIRST CHANCE AT VICTORY WILL COME
WHEN YOU DO THAT
TO WIN WITH A GRAND SCHEME.

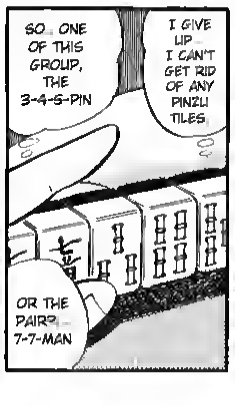
HIROYUKI'S HAND
カミッ


DID HE GET IT (CHIITSUD?
THERE SHOULD HAVE BEEN SOME WAY OF USING THE TILE THAT HE GOT RID OF

NO MATTER WHAT WITH NOTHING IN HIS HAND
HE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO GET RID OF A DANGEROUS TILE LIKE THAT

HE DREW AND DISCARDED THE DORA

I CAN'T DISCARD THE GROUP THAT INCLUDES THE DORA

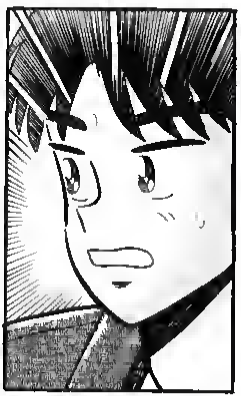

SO... ONE OF THIS GROUP, THE 3-4-5-PIN
OR THE PAIR? 7-7-MAN
I GIVE UP... I CAN'T GET RID OF ANY PINZU TILES...

ジャラ..
I WAS WATCHING OUT FOR A CHIN ITSU, KEEPING CONTROL OF ONE SUIT...
NEGLECTING MY OTHER DEFENSES
...
TAN-YAO, II-PEI-KOU, 1 DORA. THAT'S 5200...
HUH
SHIT

ハハン…

フッ…

ガシャッ
u...



FUHAHAHAHA

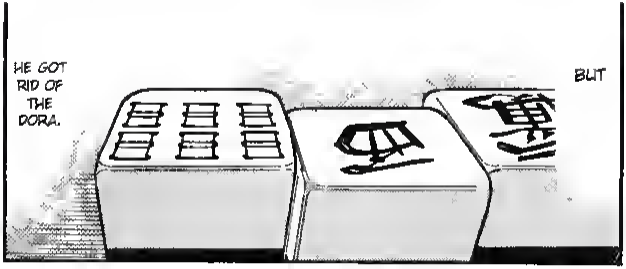
THESE GUYS'VE BEEN MAKING A MESS OF THINGS
NOT FEARING ANYTHING

YOU'LL BE FORCED INTO LOSING
WHEN YOU'RE SLOW ON THE DRAW

DID YOU SEE THAT?
HIRO-YUKI...

IT WAS SILENT, BUT THEIR SPIRITED PLAY CONTINUED.
AFTER THAT
EVEN WHILE HIS HAND WAS BEING RESTRICTED BY SHIMO-CHA'S CHIN-ITSU
BUT... HIROYUKI, WHO WAS GETTING BETTER AT MAHJONG
PLAY PROGRESSED AS THOUGH THE FOUR OF THEM WERE LOCKED IN, WITH LITTLE EXCHANGE OF POINTS COUNTERS
GRADUALLY RECOVERED.
TEN'S PUTTING UP A GOOD FIGHT.
I THOUGHT I'D LEAVE HIM IN MY DUST BUT
THAT DIFFERENCE WAS 3000 POINTS
IT WAS BY A SMALL AMOUNT, BUT TEN WAS IN THE LEAD AGAINST HIROYUKI
SOUTH 4TH ROUND
SHIT
I DON'T WANT TO CUT AND RUN WITH A CHEAP HAND BUT...
TOSS THE 2-MAN AND I'M IN TENPAI
HIROYUKI'S HAND
カミッ

THESE LAST THREE TURNS, HE KEEPS DISCARDING THE TILE HE JUST DREW...
SHIMO-CHA IS UNCOMFORTABLY HARD TO PLAY AGAINST...
AS USUAL...
Oo..
チラッ...
HE KEPT IT.
スッ!
ギュ...
GEEZ... IT'S HARD TO TELL IF THAT ONE-SUIT HAND IS A BLUFF OR NOT.
HE'S NOT GIVING OFF ANY CLUES...
HE GOT RID OF THE DORA


HE GOT RID OF THE DORA.
BUT

WHAT DO I DO IF SHIMO-CHA REALLY HAS BEEN AIMING FOR CHIN-ITSU FROM HIS STARTING HAND?

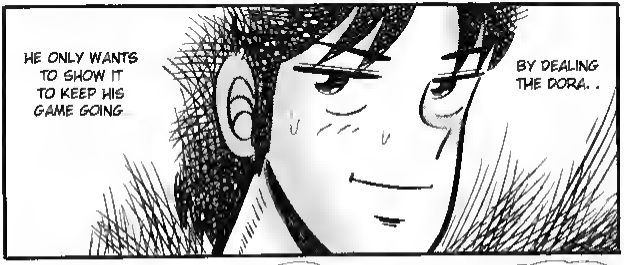
NO.. WAIT
HE'S STILL PLAYING THAT GAME, NOT KNOWING HOW DANGEROUS THAT IS IN THIS MATCH...?

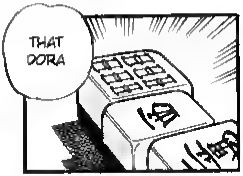
WHAT IS HE DOING, KEEPING A DANGEROUS TILE LIKE THAT!?
THE SUIT HE'S HOLDING MUST NOT HAVE ANY CONNECTION TO THE DORA?...
THAT KIND OF THING'S HAPPENED A NUMBER OF TIMES IN THIS HAN-CHAN SESSION, HASN'T IT.
NO MATTER WHAT
HE SHOULD WANT TO WIN...

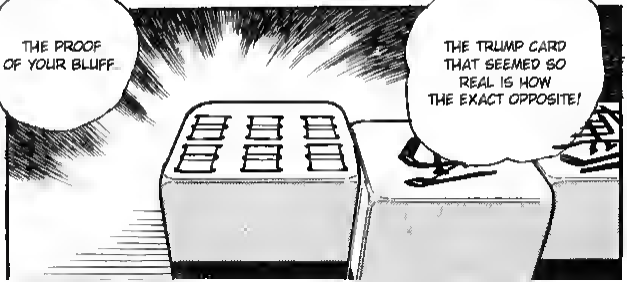
IF HE HANDLED IT BADLY AND DEALT INTO MY HAND, IT'LL BE HORRIBLE TO SEE...
WHY DID HE KEEP IT ON THE THIRD TURN?

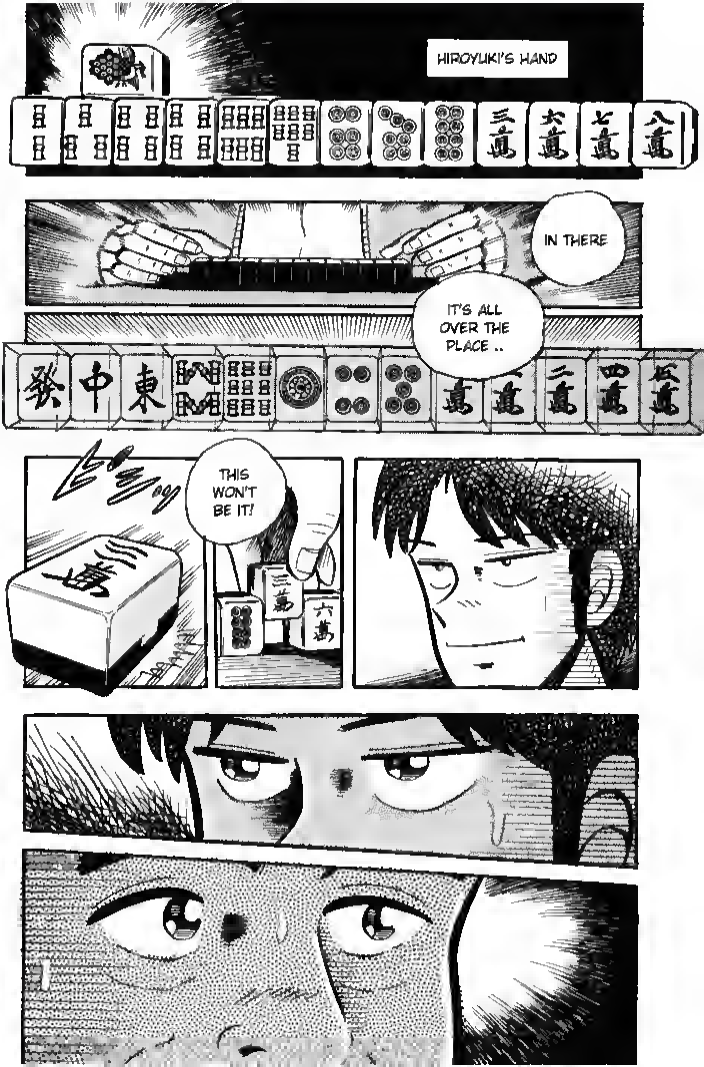
HE KEPT IT FOR A WHILE... WHICH MEANS...

IF THE DORA WASN'T PART OF HIS HAND, HE SHOULD HAVE WANTED TO GET RID OF IT, EVEN ON THE FIRST TURN

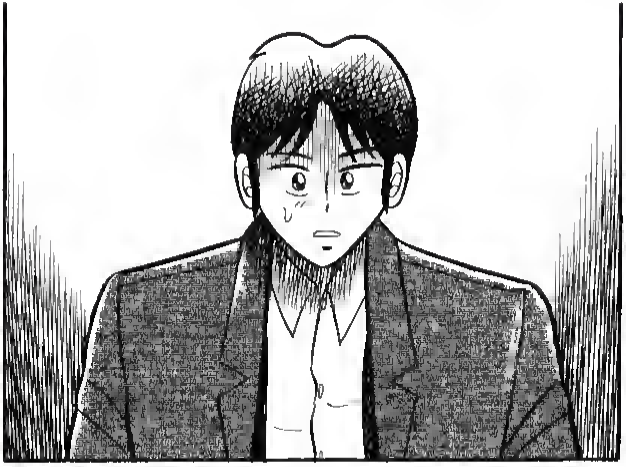







HIROYUKI'S HAND
IN THERE
IT'S ALL OVER THE PLACE ..
THIS WON'T BE IT!

BAI-MAN
CHIN-ITSU, ITSUU
IT...
THAT'S HOW?
WENT INTO HIS HAND?

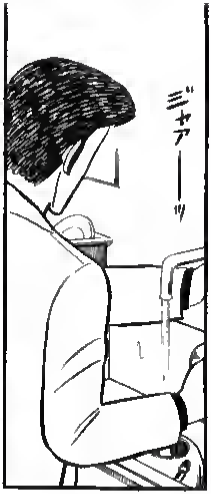


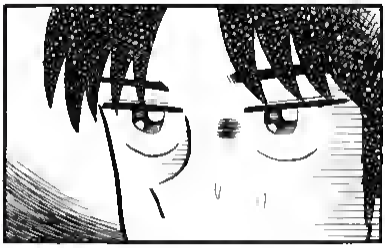
HUH?
AH
SURE
COME WITH ME
WANT SOME TEA OR SOMETHING?

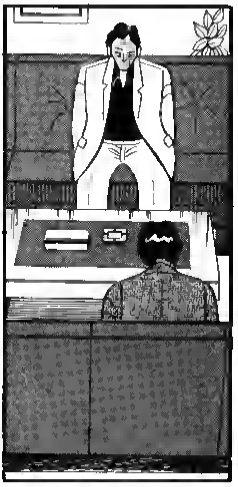
WHY HAD HE BEEN SAVING THAT TILE
WHY
ポニポニ

11ºH
TEN'S SIDE HAS THE FIRST VICTORY.
ポニポニ

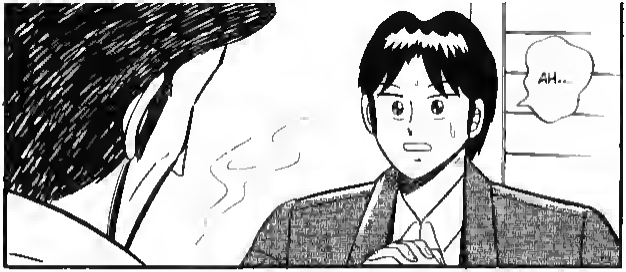
カチャッ

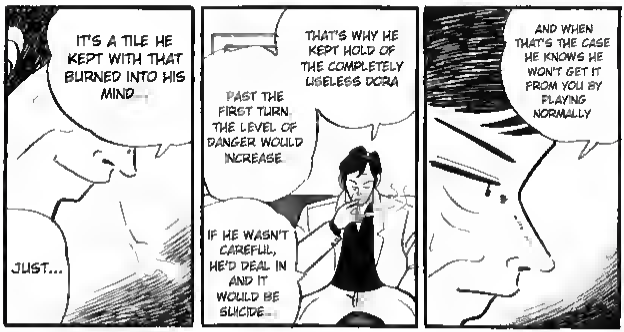

ジャアーッ

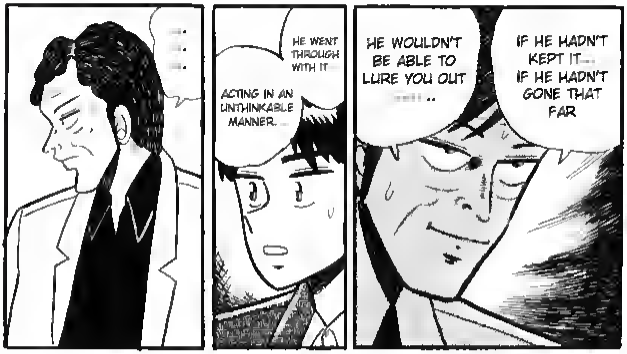




I FELL FOR THAT DORA-DEAL BLUFF, TOO.
I GET THE GENERAL IDEA OF WHAT YOU WERE THINKING
ACTING DESPERATE
THEY'RE
CAUGHT IN THEIR GRAND SCHEME
WHEN YOU WORK WITH LOGIC, YOU CAN END UP BEING TANGLED UP IN IT INSTEAD.
ESPECIALLY WITH THAT NAKANISHI BEING HARD TO FIGURE OUT
IT WAS DISCARDED
I'LL NAME IT FOR YOU. WHAT HE'S REQUIRED TO DO IS WIN FROM YOU...
IT'S ACTUALLY HIS SECONDARY GOAL
IN SHORT TO THAT NAKANISHI, IT DOESN'T MATTER IF HE WINS WITH THATH CHIN-ITSU OR WHATEVER.


AH...


IT'S A TILE HE KEPT WITH THAT BURNED INTO HIS MIND...
JUST...
THAT'S WHY HE KEPT HOLD OF THE COMPLETELY USELESS DORA
PAST THE FIRST TURN, THE LEVEL OF DANGER WOULD INCREASE.
IF HE WASN'T CAREFUL, HE'D DEAL IN AND IT WOULD BE SUICIDE...
AND WHEN THAT'S THE CASE HE KNOWS HE WON'T GET IT FROM YOU BY PLAYING NORMALLY

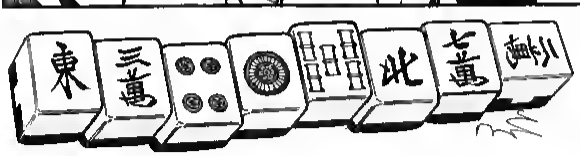

...
...
...
HE WENT THROUGH WITH IT
ACTING IN AN UNTHINKABLE MANNER.
HE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO LURE YOU OUT
IF HE HADN'T KEPT IT... IF HE HADN'T GONE THAT FAR

...OR SHOULD IT BE CALLED MADNESS...
SHOULD I CALL IT MORE DIVINE.. OR MORE OF A DIRECT ATTACK..
IT ISN'T A MATTER OF CATCHING PEOPLE IN TRAPS OR TRICKERY OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT...
WHEN YOU COME THIS FAR
HOW SHOULD I PUT IT.
HE'S WILLING TO GIVE UP EVERYTHING
.....
.....
...
...
THIS IS BAD.....
WE MIGHT NOT EVEN BE ABLE TO WIN A SINGLE GAME...

CHAPTER
7
FIGHTING
THE ODDS

2ND GAME
EAST 3RD ROUND

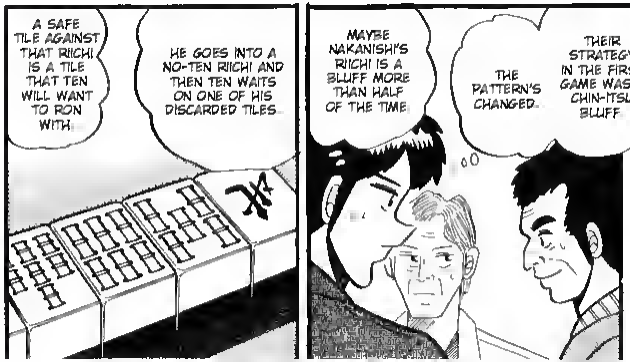
RIICHI!



I GUESS YOU COULD SAY LUCK'S WITH THE OTHER TEAM, HUH...
HIRO-YUKI'S HAND
カニッ
THIS IS THE THIRD ROUND IN A ROW HE'S DECLARED RICHI
WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN
チャラッ・・・
HE'S STILL DOING IT
RON!
I'M NOT DEALING INTO NAKA-NISHI'S HAND
THIS IS TEN'S SECOND CONTINUOUS WIN AS DEALER. I CAN'T HAVE THE GAP BETWEEN US WIDEN ANY FURTHER
THERE'S A SPOT

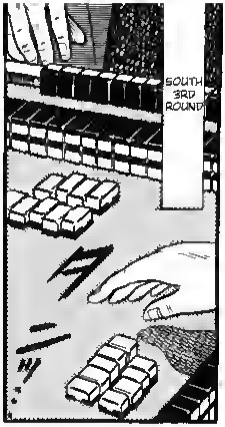
WAKE UP OVER THERE!
HEY, HEY
AH
SORRY...

WHY DIDN'T I NOTICE THAT...
I SEE .....

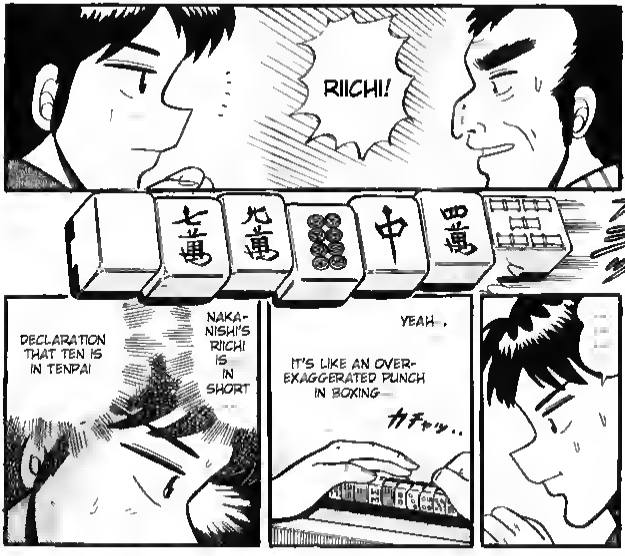

A SAFE TILE AGAINST THAT RICHI IS A TILE THAT TEN WILL WANT TO RON WITH.
HE GOES INTO A NO-TEN RICHI AND THEN TEN WAITS ON ONE OF HIS DISCARDED TILES.
MAYBE NAKANISHI'S RICHI IS A BLUFF MORE THAN HALF OF THE TIME.
THE PATTERN'S CHANGED.
THEIR STRATEGY IN THE FIRST GAME WAS A CHIN-ITSU BLUFF.

WHICH MEANS IT'S EASY FOR TEN TO FREELY CHANGE HIS WAIT ON A SINGLE TILE THIS TIME
THE ONE HE NEEDS FOR HIS PAIR
OR SEVEN PAIRS LIKE HE HAD A MINUTE AGO
ドニッ…
SHIT
ピニッ
ヤニッ
12000
POINTS DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIROYUKI AND TEN

WAIT...


SOUTH 3RD ROUND

THIS PATTERN IS...
CAN'T I THINK ABOUT THIS THE OTHER WAY AROUND...? IF I CHANGE THE WAY I'M THINKING ABOUT IT...

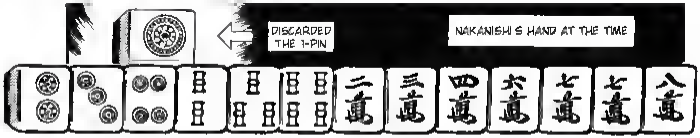

RIICHI!
七萬
九萬
中
四萬
DECLARATION THAT TEN IS IN TENPAI
NAKA-NISHI'S RIICHI IS IN SHORT...
YEAH...
IT'S LIKE AN OVER-EXAGGERATED PUNCH IN BOXING...
カチャッ..

TEN'S DISCARDS
TEN'S WAY MORE WORRYING THAN NAKANISHI!!
A SUJI TILE
I JUST HAVE TO FOLLOW TEN'S DISCARDS
HUH?
RON.
THERE'S AN OPEN-ING.
AH...

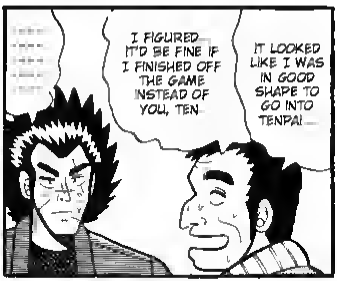
THIS TIME, TEN DROPPED THE TILE NAKANISHI WAS WAITING FOR...
IT'S THE OPPOSITE!
I FELL FOR IT.
TEN'S SIDE HAS TWO WINS.

SORRY...
I...MEAN...
DON'T APOLOGIZE!
JUST WIN IN THE END!
CAN YOU DO IT?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN...
THERE WAS A CLEAR FLAW IN TEN'S SIDE IN IN THE SOUTH 4TH ROUND.
THE THOROUGH-NESS THEY HAD AT THE START IS DISAPPEAR-ING...
WE COULDN'T RECOVER THAT TIME BUT...
THE MATCH WAS OVER WHEN I DEALT INTO HIS HAND IN THE SOUTH 3RD ROUND
I CAN

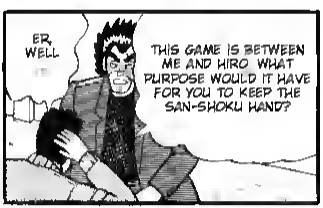
I'LL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT
I WON'T LET THEM WIN EVEN ONE MORE GAME
EVEN THAT HIROYUKI KID DIDN'T HAVE A CLUE...
OLD FELLA...
THAT WAS GREAT!
WE'RE WINNING! WE'RE WINNING SO FAR!
WHY DID YOU IGNORE MY SIGNAL TO RICHI IN THE SOUTH 4TH ROUND...?
OH— THAT...

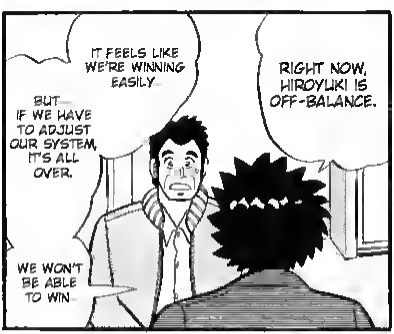

DISCARDED THE 1-PIN
NAKANISHI'S HAND AT THE TIME

WHY DIDN'T YOU DROP THE 4-PIN AND SUPPORT MY 7-PIN MIDDLE WAIT?
YOU DROPPED THE 1-PIN? YOUR HAND WAS 1-2-3-4 THERE
2-3-4 GAVE ME SAN-SHOKU


I FIGURED IT'D BE FINE IF I FINISHED OFF THE GAME INSTEAD OF YOU, TEN
IT LOOKED LIKE I WAS IN GOOD SHAPE TO GO INTO TENPAI

DON'T MAKE A MISTAKE!


ER, WELL
THIS GAME IS BETWEEN ME AND HIRO. WHAT PURPOSE WOULD IT HAVE FOR YOU TO KEEP THE SAN-SHOKU HAND?


IT FEELS LIKE WE'RE WINNING EASILY...
BUT... IF WE HAVE TO ADJUST OUR SYSTEM, IT'S ALL OVER.
WE WON'T BE ABLE TO WIN...
RIGHT NOW, HIROYUKI IS OFF-BALANCE.

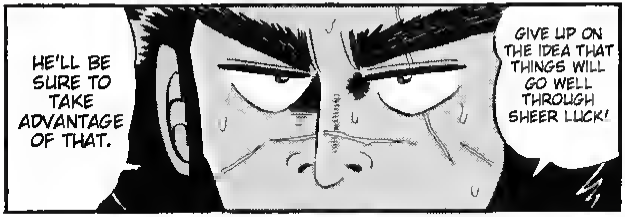
DON'T EVER BLOW THAT OUT OF PROPORTION.
WE'RE FINALLY EVENLY-MATCHED AGAINST HIROYUKI!

二萬
三萬
四萬
五萬
六萬
七萬
八萬

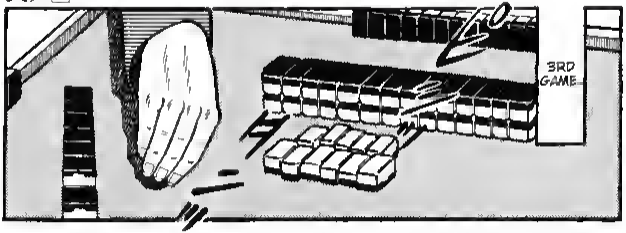
IT'LL BE FATAL...
YOU'RE DIGGING YOUR OWN GRAVE

YOU TRIED TO DO WELL FOR EITHER OF US...
YOU THOUGHT WHEN YOU HAD THAT HAND THAT EITHER YOU OR I COULD WIN...
RIGHT?

THAT KIND OF HALF-ASSED THINKING...


HE'LL BE SURE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THAT.
GIVE UP ON THE IDEA THAT THINGS WILL GO WELL THROUGH SHEER LUCK!

IF WE CAN, I WANT TO KEEP HIS GREATNESS ASLEEP THE WHOOOOLE WAY THROUGH!
HIS GREATNESS IS STILL SLEEPING.


3RD GAME

RIICH!!

LUCK IS WITH TEN.

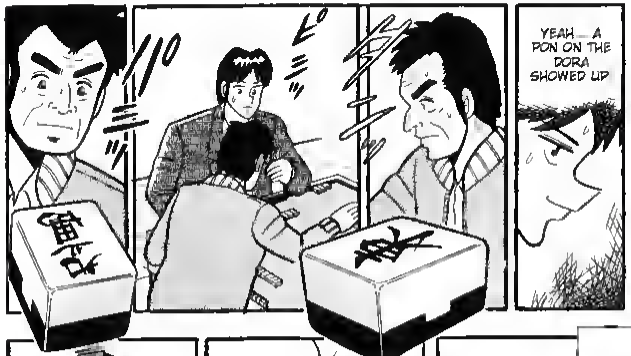
TEN'S SIDE IS DOING THE USUAL TACTIC OF NO-TEN RIICH!

NAKANISHI DID A GOOD JOB MAKING HIS HAND.
IT'S NOT ACTUALLY A NO-TEN RIICH!
TSUMO!

HIRO-YUKI IS STRUG-GLING

TENPAI
A DRAW
11°9...
A SMALL CHANGE SHOWED IN NAKANISHI
BUT IN THE EAST 4TH ROUND
THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIM AND TEN IS -8200
I BET HE DREW A HAND THAT LOOKED LIKE IT HAD POTENTIAL TO BE ITSUU
THIS - UP UNTIL NOW, HE'D STOPPED ME WITH AN EARLY RICHI

HIROYUKI'S HAND
カミッ
SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT THAN IN THE TWO GAMES BEFORE THIS
WHAT WILL DETERMINE WHO WINS NOW WILL BE...
IF THAT'S THE CASE
發 發 中
九萬 九萬
THE DORA IS HATSU
PON!


YEAH... A PON ON THE DORA SHOWED UP

OKAY...!
UP UNTIL NOW, HE WOULD HAVE DECLARED RICH!
HE DEFINITELY FOLDED...
I GOT HIM INTO A STALEMATE...
DRAW

HE'S STILL GIVING IT EVERYTHING HE'S GOT.
NATURALLY...
NAKANISHI'S WORRIED.....
I CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THAT
PLAYING DESPERATELY BUT THAT DESPERATION IS HOLDING HIM BACK.
HE'S BEING DRAGGED DOWN BY HIS DESIRES TOO
YOU CAN'T WAVER IN THE FACE OF RISK IF YOU WANT TO WIN
SCARED TO RISK HIS LIFE
HE'S NOT CRAZY. HE'S BEEN SCARED SO FAR
FROM THAT DESIRE FOR HIS LIFE, THAT DESIRE TO WIN
THE OPENING THAT WILL WIN THIS GAME IS BORN

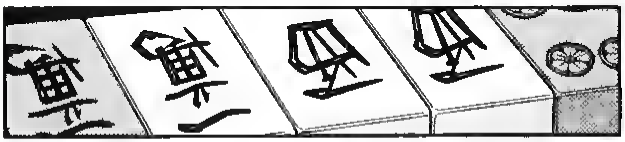
SOUTH 2ND ROUND
NAKANISHI'S DISCARDS
チラッ
OKAY
NAKANISHI IS GOING FOR KOKUSHI
HIROYUKI'S HAND

カミッ
NAKANISHI'S HAND
發 中 東 南 北
三萬 六萬
THAT HIROYUKI BOY IS THE DEALER... EVEN IF I WIN WITH TSUMO...
IT'LL BE ANOTHER 8000 POINTS DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIM AND TEN...
ANOTHER TWO TILES TO TENPAI
SO FAR SO GOOD...
カミッ
IF I WIN WITH THIS, THAT'LL FINISH THE GAME!
ANOTHER TWO TILES...
SORRY, TEN, BUT I CAN'T DECLARE A NO-TEN RIICHI WITH THIS HAND...
發 中 東 南 北
三萬 六萬
AND ONLY ONE 1-MAN LEFT...
THERE'S ALREADY TWO XIA TILES OUT...
グッ…
ANOTHER ONE TILE TO TENPAI!
XIA OR 1-MAN...
ALL RIGHT!!

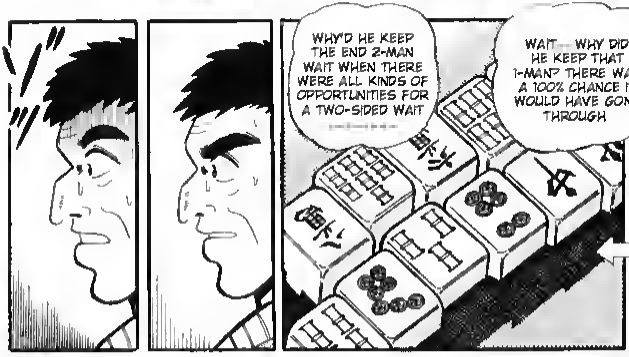
HIROYUKI'S DISCARDS
IT'S STILL POSSIBLE
HE IGNORED MY SIGNAL TO RICHI AGAIN
THIS IS BAD
IF HE KEEPS THINKING POSITIVE LIKE THAT, HE'LL PLAY RIGHT INTO HIROYUKI'S HANDS
THIS IS DANGEROUS
TRYING TO WIN.
HE'S TRYING TO DO SOMETHING WITH HIS OWN HAND

PEOPLE USE WHATEVER MEANS THEY CAN TO ACHIEVE THEIR DESIRES
SURE, IT'S PROBABLY SERVED HIM WELL IN THE MAJORITY OF HIS LIFE
INSTEAD, YOU LOSE EVERYTHING TO YOUR DESIRES .....
BUT IT'S THE OTHER WAY AROUND IN GAMBLING!
RON!
HH

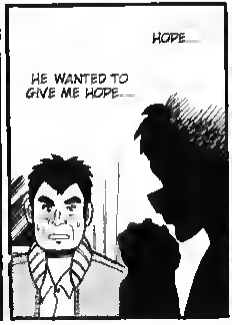
XIA OR 1-MAN
SHIT... I ONLY NEEDED ONE MORE TILE TO GET INTO TENPAI...



THEN HE KNEW I WAS IN 11-SHAN-TEN FOR A KOKUSHI HAND
THE REMAINING ONE 1-MAN AND TWO XIA WERE IN THAT BOY HIROYUKI'S HAND...

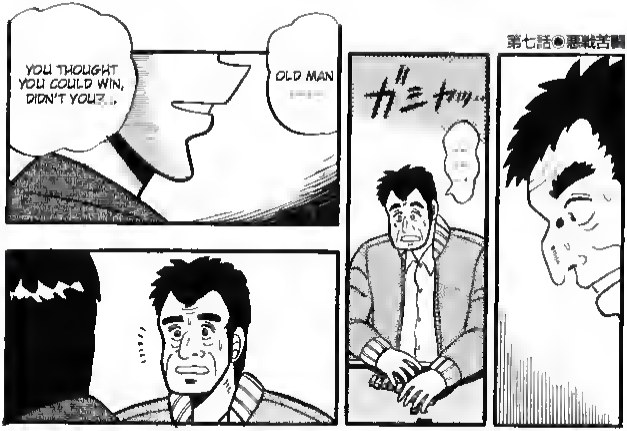

WHY'D HE KEEP THE END 2-MAN WAIT WHEN THERE WERE ALL KINDS OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR A TWO-SIDED WAIT...
WAIT... WHY DID HE KEEP THAT 1-MAN? THERE WAS A 100% CHANCE IT WOULD HAVE GONE THROUGH.
HIROYUKI'S DISCARDS

AND THEN I DEALT INTO HIS HAND...


HOPE...
HE WANTED TO GIVE ME HOPE...

...HE DIDN'T WANT TO MAKE THE POSSIBILITY OF MY KOKUSHI DISAPPEAR...

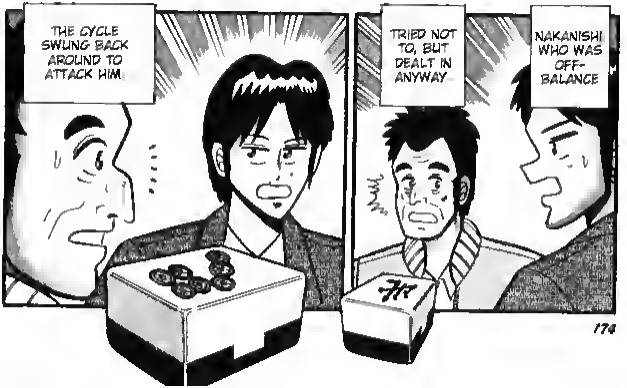
IT'LL BE FATAL...
THAT WAY OF THINKING..... THAT IT'LL GO WELL BY SHEER LUCK

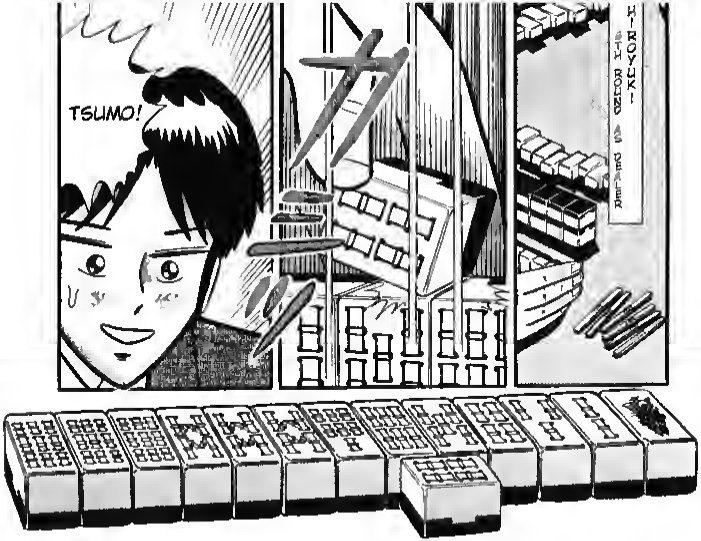

YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD WIN, DIDN'T YOU?...
OLD MAN
カミナリ...

YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO WIN EVEN ONE MORE GAME.
THAT'S WHY...

天
CHAPTER 5
VOLATILE SITUATION

THE THIRD MATCH BEGAN
WAS WHEN HIROYUKI STRUCK
WITH THE STRONG-HOLD OF THEIR TEAM-WORK WAVERING
NAKA-NISHI'S TINY DECISION
TEN'S SIDE HELD THE LEAD FOR TWO GAMES BUT

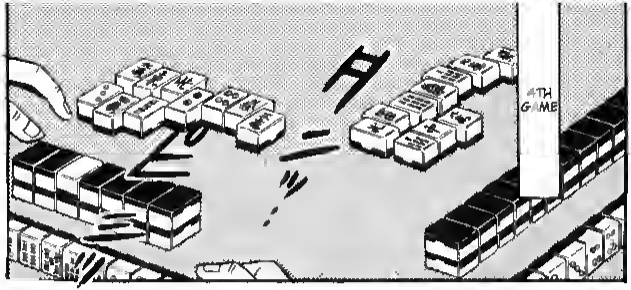

THE CYCLE SWUNG BACK AROUND TO ATTACK HIM
TRIED NOT TO, BUT DEALT IN ANYWAY
NAKANISHI WHO WAS OFF-BALANCE


TSUMO!
HIROYUKI WITH SEVEN PAIRS

THAT WAS THE POINT AT WHICH IT BECAME A MATTER OF POINTS BETWEEN HIROYUKI AND TEN
MENZEN, CHIN-ITSU NAKANISHI LOST ALL HIS POINTS AND FELL BELOW ZERO, ENDING THE THIRD GAME
HIROYUKI'S SIDE GOT BACK ONE VICTORY
A LAND-SLIDE VICTORY

YES...
THE LIGHTS?
TEN'S CHOSEN METHOD IS TO GO FOR A TSUBAME-GAESHI TENHOU, CHUUREN-POUTOU IN THE DARK...
I WANT WATCH KEPT OVER THE BREAKERS IN THE ELECTRICAL ROOM.
IT WAS CLEARLY LAID OUT IN FRONT OF ME ONCE.
A WHILE AGO.
SURE. I'LL HAVE THE GUYS BELOW CHECK IT OUT.
FOR NOW, I WANT TO HAVE THE LIGHTS UNDER CONTROL.
I DON'T KNOW HE COULD... FOR THE SAME THING AGAIN
HMMM.

HUH?
SO... I WONDER IF THAT'LL BE ALL...
THEIR TEAMWORK'S BEEN SHATTERED
IF WE HAVE THE LIGHTS UNDER CONTROL, WE'LL BE SAFE FROM THE THE TENHOU CHUUREN
I GUESS THAT MEANS WE'VE ALREADY DESTROYED ALL OF THE WAYS FOR TEN'S SIDE TO WIN...
YEAH...
MAYBE...


4TH GAME

STILL NOT DEAD...
TEN IS...

I'M NOT FEELING IT AT ALL
SAWADA SEEMS SATISFIED BUT...

IT'S ODD...
BUT...

WHAT ARE YOU UP TO...?
TEN, YOU JERK!

RIGHT NOW, HE'S PLAYING LIKE... HE DOESN'T CARE IF HE WINS...
HE'S NOT INTO IT AT ALL...

TEN'S JUST BEEN FOLDING IN THIS GAME

TSUMO!
SOME-THING SHOULD
IT SHOULD BE COMING!
IT MAKES IT LOOK LIKE HIS SITUATION IS GETTING WORSE AND WORSE LIKE HE'S JUST GIVEN UP ON THE 4TH GAME
WHEN HE'S NOT INTO THE GAME
ミャラ
ミャラ
PLANNING TO GIVE UP ON THE FOURTH GAME!
OR IS HE
HIRO-YUKI'S LEAD 20500
STILL NOTHING
HIRO-YUKI'S LEAD 14000
NO TRICKS YET
ENTERING THE SOUTH ROUNDS

OPEN TILES
DISCARDS
SOUTH 3RD ROUND
THIS IS THE END-GAME
NOTHING LEFT AFTER THIS
MAYBE TEN HAS A HON-ITSU HAND
OR A DIFFERENT SUIT AND PIN-FU HON-ITSU WITH NO TIES TO THE DORA (5-SOU)
THERE'S NO WAY FOR HIM TO MAKE A COMEBACK
KAN.
THE NEW DORA IS...

FOUR DORA
THE DORA IS CHUN!
HATSU!
GIMME A TSUMO!
INTO MY TWO-SIDED WAIT...
IF IT IS COME ON,
THIS MUST BE MY LAST BIT OF LUCK
HEH HEH
TSUMO.
RINSHAN-KAIHOU, TSUMO, HON-ITSU, 4 DORA OF THE CHUN. IT'S A BAIMAN HAND.

UM...
SORRY ABOUT THAT... I'M JUST LUCKY AT MAHJONG

HOW'S IT LOOK NOW WITH MY BAIMAN?
I CAN'T STOP LAUGHING ABOUT THIS ONE! HEY, OLD FELLA! DO THE CALCULATIONS! UP UNTIL A MINUTE AGO THE GAP BETWEEN ME AND HIRO WAS 20500!

ONE LAST ROUND

ALL RIGHT!
HIROYUKI WASN'T DEALER, SO IT'S 16000 PLUS 4000, WHICH MAKES YOU CALGHT UP TO ONLY 500 POINTS DIFFERENCE!

I'VE GOT THE ADVANTAGE NOW THAT LUCK'S ON MY SIDE, HIRO!
IN A SINGLE ROUND, THERE'S NO BRAGGING OR SKILL INVOLVED! JUST THE WAY THE TILES FALL.

THAT BASTARD'S A LIAR.
YOU THINK THAT WAS LUCK?
THERE'S ONLY ONE REASON WHY HE'D BYPASS IT
HE HAD SOME WAY
OF KNOWING THE TILE HE WOULD DRAW
AND GET BOTH THE KAN ON THE DORA AND THE RINSHAN-KAIHOU
WHAT A JOKE
HE WAS IN TENPAI WAITING ON THE 1-PIN OR 4-PIN. DIDN'T I DROP THE 4-PIN JUST BEFORE HE WON?
HE OVER-LOOKED A 5200-POINT WIN FROM HIS DIRECT OPPONENT ON PURPOSE
DID HE STACK THE WALL?
BUT THAT'S SAWADA'S WALL.
HIROYUKI IS SUSPICIOUS TOO
THAT'S RIGHT
THAT WAS AN UNNATURAL WIN

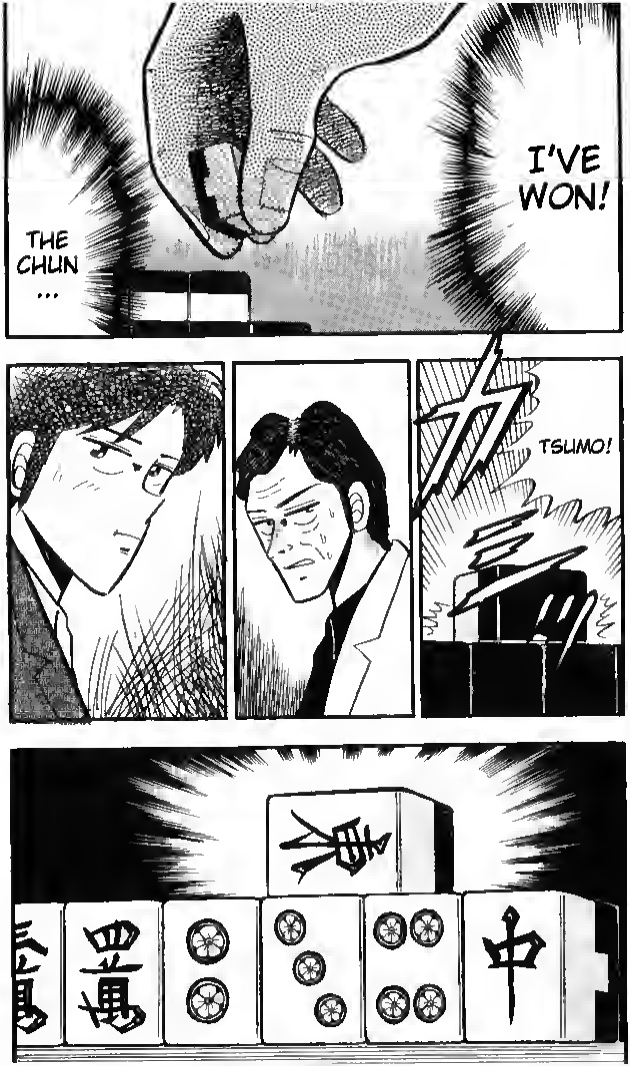
WHAT IT STINKS THE MOST OF IS GANPA! (A TRICK WHERE THE BACKS OF THE TILES ARE MARKED.)
I'M SURE HE DID SOMETHING
SOUTH 4TH ROUND
AH...
HAVING SAID THAT IT'S LIKE HE PUT A MARK SOMEWHERE
BUT... IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE THERE ARE ANY SCRATCHES ON THEM

NICOTINE
AH...
WE'VE BEEN HAD!
AND OVER THERE TOO...
IT'S ON THAT TILE...
THAT TILE...
WHEN I TRY TO SPOT IT...
THAT BASTARD, HE RUBBED ASHES FROM HIS CIGARETTE ON THEM...
BUT HE CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT NOW!
JUST LIKE THAT YAKUZA TO BE THE ONLY ONE SENSITIVE TO MY UNDERHANDED TRICKERY...
HEH HEH

IMPROVISED GANPAI
IMPRO-VISED GANPAI.
IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE HAN-CHAN SESSION I FOCUSED ON MAKING MY GANPAI.
A SIMPLE AND EFFECTIVE TRICK.
IF IT'S NOTICED AND THE TILES ARE CHANGED, IT'S ALL OVER.
BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, IT'S EASY FOR ONE'S OPPONENT TO SEE THROUGH THAT SIMPLICITY.
YOU CAN ONLY USE THIS TRICK IN THE LAST OR SECOND TO LAST ROUND.
HUH...!
HE SHOULD HAVE STOPPED IT LAST ROUND.
THAT IS WHEN IT HAS THE MOST CHANCE TO BE EFFECTIVE.
THIS ROUND IS FINISHED!
THIS SECOND ROUND OF IT GIVES ME A CHANCE... TO DEAL THE FINAL BLOW!

CHII!
OPEN TILES
TEN'S HAND
WILL BE THE ONE I DRAW IF THIS KEEPS UP
THAT GANPAI CHUN
THE NEXT ONE I DRAW
NOW I'M IN TENPAI, WAITING ON A CHUN
AT THIS RATE, HE WON'T NEED TO RON, HE CAN TSUMO INSTEAD!
TEN'S NEXT DRAW IS A GANPAI
I CAN'T LET THIS HAPPEN

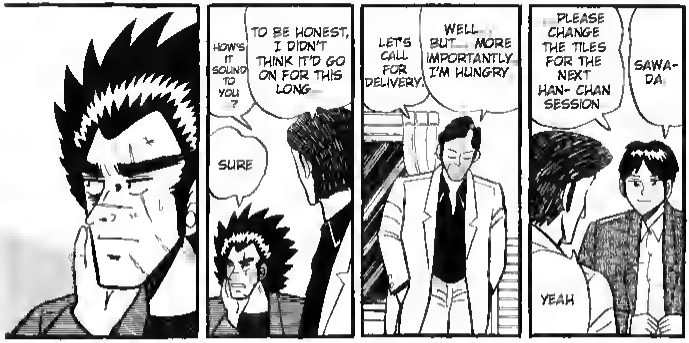
IT'S NO GOOD...
HIROYUKI, TAKE IT...
IF I CAN'T TAKE HIROYUKI'S TILE TEN WILL BE ABLE TO DRAW THE GANPAI
IT'S NO GOOD...


I'VE WON!
THE CHUN ...
TSUMO!

OH, I GET IT.....
WHY?
TON~?
IT WAS HIROYUKI .....

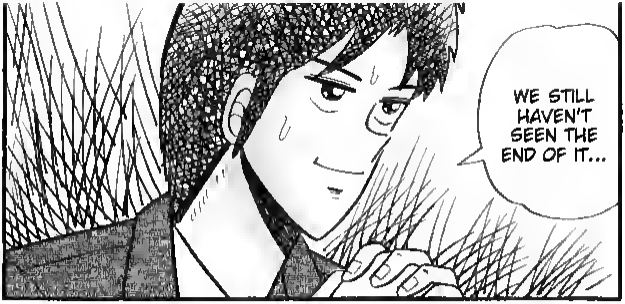
AND WENT AROUND MARKING OTHER TILES WITH THE SAME MARKS AS MY GANDA!
HE NOTICED ME STACKING THE WALL RIGHT AWAY
HE HASN'T OPENED HIS HAND YET, HAS HE
SHIT... THAT FAKER.
JUST BARELY
HOLDING ON, ARE YOU?
2600 POINTS
TSUMO!

IN TOTAL, TWO WINS AND TWO LOSSES
TWO WINS FOR HIRO-YUKI


HOW'S IT SOUND TO YOU?
TO BE HONEST, I DIDN'T THINK IT'D GO ON FOR THIS LONG...
SURE
LET'S CALL FOR DELIVERY.
WELL... BUT... MORE IMPORTANTLY I'M HUNGRY
PLEASE CHANGE THE TILES FOR THE NEXT HAN-CHAN SESSION
SAWA-DA
YEAH

チー
?
WHAT ABOUT KEEPING AN EYE ON THE PHONES?
AH... THERE'S A RAMEN PLACE I KNOW OF IN 4-CHO BUT...
IT'S FINE, JUST SHUT UP AND DO WHAT I SAY...

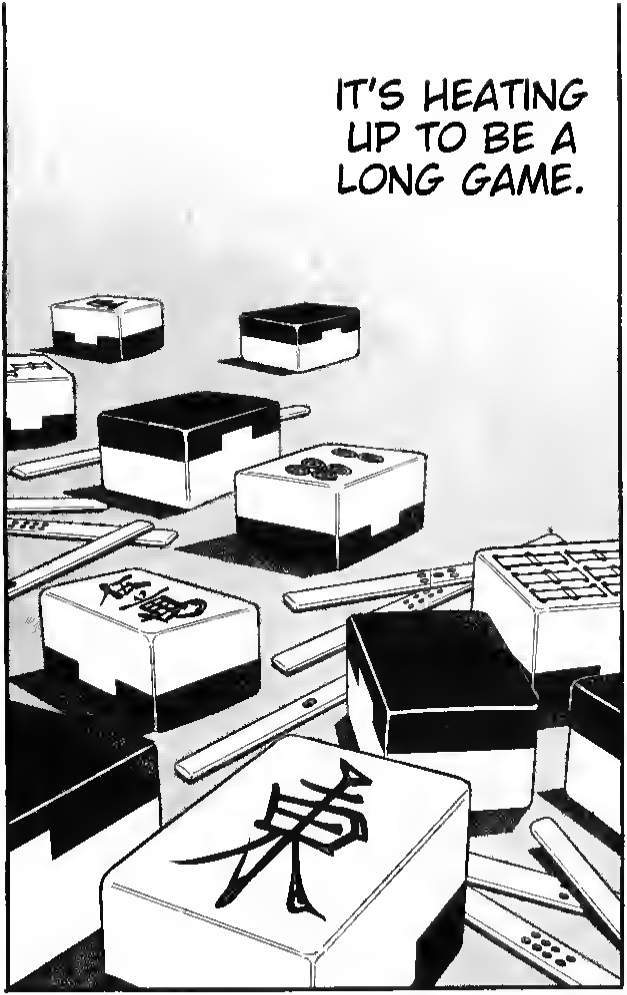
THAT IDIOT... I THOUGHT HE MIGHT CUT THE LINES OR SOMETHING... SO I'VE GOT 'EM KEEPING AN EYE ON THE TELEPHONE POLES
HUH...
TENHOU CHUUREN
THAT THING YOU TALKED ABOUT... WHEN THE LIGHTS WENT OUT...
AH... I'M JUST A BIT UNEASY...
WHAT WAS THAT?
WELL...
IT'S A CRAZY THING TO THINK OF BUT...
CRAZY THINGS KEEP HAPPENING LATELY
I FELL FOR IT IN THAT LAST ROUND
THAT WAS A CLOSE ONE
YOUR WITS JUST BARELY SAVED US
IN THAT AREA YOU'VE GOT BETTER THAN AVERAGE SENSES TO BE ABLE TO TURN YOUR OPPONENT'S TRICKS BACK ON HIM...
ANYWAY...
YOU REALLY ARE GOOD
TEN'S GOOD TOO


WE STILL HAVEN'T SEEN THE END OF IT...

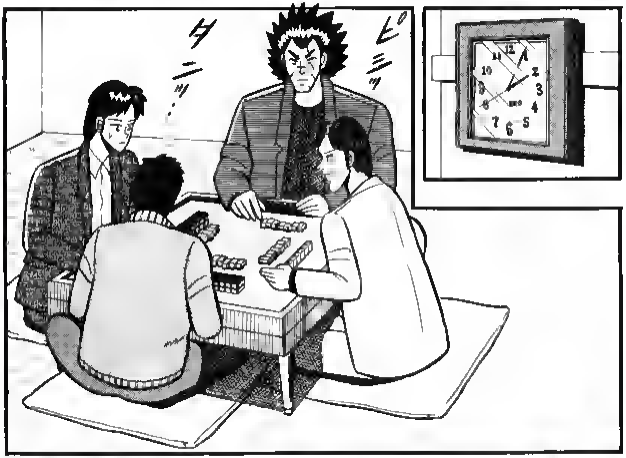
JUST... I CAN'T SHAKE THE UNEASY FEELING THAT HE HAVEN'T SEEN THE DEPTHS HE'LL SINK TO...
HE WON'T LOSE EASILY...
WHATEVER TEN DOES NEXT...
HE'S GOT SPIRIT
HE'S BEEN FIGHTING WITHOUT IT.
TEN STILL HASN'T USED HIS SPECIALTY, THE TENHOU CHUUREN

BUT WE'VE BASICALLY GRABBED HOLD OF HIS COLLAR TO DRAG HIM CLOSER
SURE, WE HAVEN'T SEEN HOW FAR HE'LL GO...
THERE'S NO WAY WE'VE SEEN THOSE DEPTHS YET...

HE'S CLEARLY TAKEN A LARGE STEP FORWARD
COMPARED AGAINST THE TEAMWORK THEY DID UNTIL THE THIRD GAME...
ON A DANGEROUS LINE
IF WE'D BEEN CAUGHT IN HIS TRAP... HE PROBABLY PLANNED TO PRETEND HE HAD NO IDEA WHAT WAS GOING ON AND SAY IT WAS COINCIDENCE OR SOMETHING...
WE'VE ALREADY BARELY PUT A STOP TO THAT... IT'D BE A PRETTY PATHETIC EXCUSE TO HEAR...
THAT GANPAI JUST NOW.
IS GETTING DESPERATE TOO...
THEIR SIDE...
BUT HE DIDN'T HAVE A CHOICE! IN SHORT
HE MUS NOT HAVE WANTED TO USE IT IF HE DIDN'T HAVE TO...
HE'S BEING DRIVEN INTO A CORNER
IT'S BECOME A BATTLE-FIELD...
THE NEXT HAN-CHAN SESSION IS THE FINAL SHOWDOWN OF ALL FIVE MATCHES WITH TWO WINS AND TWO LOSSES IT'LL BE AN ALL-OUT WAR OF SKILL, WITS, AND TRICKERY...
EITHER WAY...

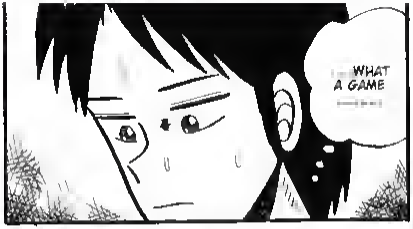

IT'S HEATING UP TO BE A LONG GAME.

CHAPTER
BODY AND SOUL


ドン!
ドン!

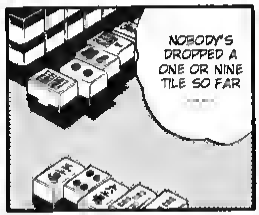
THE 5TH GAME

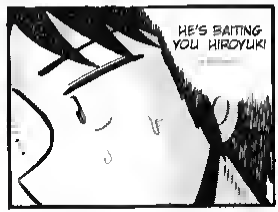
TEN'S SIDE USED THE STRATEGY OF THE KOKUSHI BLUFF!
EAST 2ND ROUND
EAST 1ST ROUND
DRAW

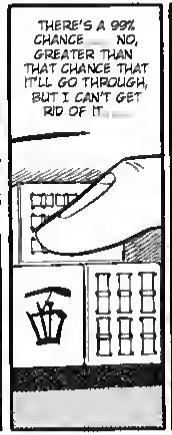

WHAT A GAME

EAST 3RD ROUND

HIROYUKI'S HAND

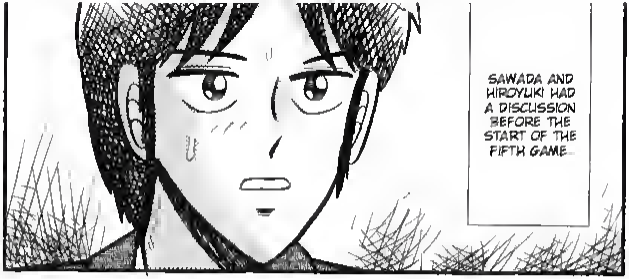

NOBODY'S DROPPED A ONE OR NINE TILE SO FAR


HE'S BAITING YOU HIROYUKI

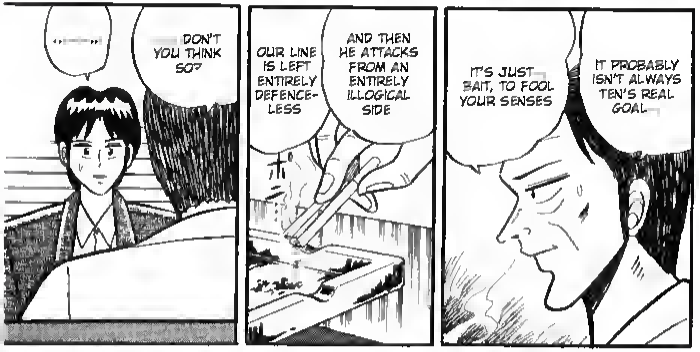

THERE'S A 99% CHANCE NO, GREATER THAN THAT CHANCE THAT IT'LL GO THROUGH, BUT I CAN'T GET RID OF IT

THE 4TH XIA ON THE 12 TURN.
IF I DISCARD THE XIA, I'M IN TENPAI

SAWADA


SAWADA AND HIROYUKI HAD A DISCUSSION BEFORE THE START OF THE FIFTH GAME...

EVER SINCE HE STARTED WITH THAT CHIN-ITSU BLUFF, IT'S ALL BEEN A BLUFF, INCLUDING THE NO-TEN RIICHI.
FROM LOOKING AT TEN'S PLAYING STYLE SO FAR, THAT'S WHAT I THINK...
BAIT?
YEAH


...
DON'T YOU THINK SO?
OUR LINE IS LEFT ENTIRELY DEFENCE-LESS
AND THEN HE ATTACKS FROM AN ENTIRELY ILLOGICAL SIDE
IT'S JUST BAIT, TO FOOL YOUR SENSES
IT PROBABLY ISN'T ALWAYS TEN'S REAL GOAL

IT FEELS LIKE WE'RE FIGHTING SHADOWS.
IT'S AN ILLUSION .....
WHILE KNOWING THAT HE HAS THE ADVANTAGE
HE'S ALWAYS BEEN PLAYING ON OUR FEARS OF THE WORST POSSIBLE SITUATION
IT MUST HAVE BEEN AT FIRST...
AND OUR CAUTION ONLY BROUGHT IT OUT MORE.
BAIT
EVEN THAT TENHOU CHUUREN TSUBAME-GAESHI YOU SPOKE OF
ACTUALLY ABOUT THAT TENHOU CHUUREN
SAWADA
I REALIZED A VERY SIMPLE SOLUTION TO IT JUST NOW.

IT'S NOT THAT GREAT OF A PLAN BUT...
?
一萬 二萬 三萬 四萬 伍萬 六萬 七萬 八萬 九萬 九萬 九萬
THIS WAY, HE CAN'T PHYSICALLY DO IT...
WHEN BUILDING YOUR WALL, PUT IN TWO OF EITHER THE 1-MAN OR THE 9-MAN TILES
IT'S NOTHING MUCH...
I JUST HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF MY WALL...
SO...
FOR TENHOU CHUUREN, HE'D ABSOLUTELY HAVE TO HAVE THREE OF THE ONE AND NINE TILES
I HAVE THIS HUNCH HE'LL MAKE IT A CHUUREN HAND...
BUT... IF TEN USES HIS TSUBAME-GAESHI TRICK...
EVEN THOUGH I DON'T HAVE ANY EVIDENCE TO BACK IT UP...
WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT THAT
AND WHAT ABOUT A REGULAR TENHOU HAND?
I SEE...

EVEN KNOWING FULL WELL THAT IT'S FOOLISH...
HE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO PERFORM SUCH A HUGE TRICK IN AN INSTANT IF HE DIDN'T HAVE STRONG FEELINGS ABOUT IT. IT MAKES YOU HAVE SOME RESPECT FOR HIS SPIRIT...
WELL...
ACTUALLY, I WAS THINKING THAT TOO...
YOU COULD CALL IT SHOW-MANSHIP...
THE PRIDE OF A GAMBLER.
THERE'S NO WAY HE CAN GET JUST TENHOU...
TENHOU CHUUREN...
THAT IDEA IS...
WHAT MAKES THIS TILE CRUCIAL...
AS LONG AS WE PROTECT OUR-SELVES FROM THE TENHOU CHUURENAND HAVE CONTROL OVER HIS TRICKS IT'S NO PROBLEM...
HEH HEH...
IF I DISCARD IT... THE MATCH COULD END INSTANTLY, WITH ME BELOW ZERO POINTS.
THIS XIA...
ONCE AGAIN, BACK TO THE SITUATION IN THE EAST 3RD ROUND

NOBODY'S WINNING
WHAT A GAME
EAST 4TH ROUND
ピミッ
SHIT!
IN SOME DEEP, DARK PLACE INSIDE
SOME-THING LIKE DETER-MINATION
IT TESTS SOMETHING EVEN MORE ENTIRELY DIFFERENT
AT THE VERY VERY END... WHAT MAKES A GAMBLER ISN'T SKILL OR WITS
WHEN YOU COME THIS FAR
LIKE WE'RE PLAYING AT THE BOTTOM OF THE OCEAN.
ピ
IT'S SO QUIET

ENTERING THE SOUTH ROUNDS
TSUMO
TEN MAKES A MOVE
AT LAST
3900 TOTAL, 2000/1000 POINTS

POINT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIM AND HIROYUKI: 8000
RON!!
TEN GETS A WIN
TURNING FROM THE KOKUSHI BLUFF
PON.
SOUTH 3RD ROUND
PON.

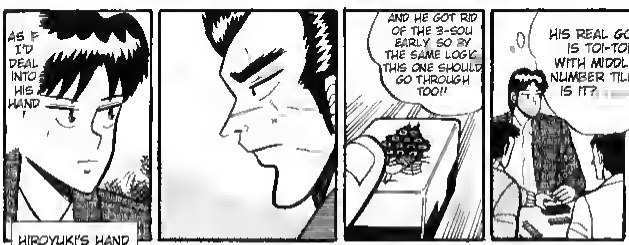
OPEN TILES
DISCARDS
HIRO-YUKI'S HAND
BUT HE'S DISCARDED A LOT OF THE MANZU TILES
CHIN-ITSU?
CHIN-ROU-TOU OR CHANTA
FOR NOW, SHOULD I DROP THE 8-SOU AND WORK AROUND HIM?
I REALLY WANT TO GET RID OF THE 1-PIN BUT...
NO WAIT
I'LL THINK ABOUT IT, GIVEN WHERE WE ARE IN THE GAMES

HE TOOK THE 1-MAN AND 9-MAN WHEN THEY CAME OUT. IF TEN WAS HOLDING TWO OF THE 1-PIN,
DIDN'T THAT 3-PIN COME OUT AWFULLY EARLY...?
MAYBE WHAT HE HAD AT THE START WAS...
MENTAL IMAGE OF TEN'S STARTING HAND
WAIT...
THOSE DISCARDS OF TEN'S
SO THAT HE DROPPED IT ON THE THIRD TURN MEANS... IN SHORT...
EVEN IF HIS HAND LOOKED LIKE THAT, HE STILL WOULDN'T DROP THE 3-PIN.
THAT SHAPE... NO, THE 3-PIN WAS DISCARDED TOO EARLY FOR THAT. RATHER THAN GO FOR CHIN-ROU-TOU OR SOMETHING, HIS PRIORITY WOULD BE TO WIN...
HE DOESN'T HAVE ANY OF THE 1-PIN IN HIS HAND.
IF HE WAS HOLDING TWO OR THREE OF THE 1-PIN, HE WOULD WANT TO KEEP THE 3-PIN...

……

JUST LIKE I FIGURED ……

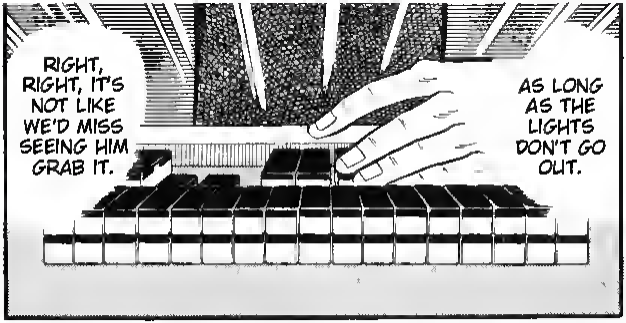
HE WANTS TO TRICKS THE PLAYERS' SENSES.
THE 1-MAN AND 9-MAN PON WERE THE BAIT WE TALKED ABOUT.


AS IF I'D DEAL INTO HIS HAND
AND HE GOT RID OF THE 3-SOU EARLY SO BY THE SAME LOGIC THIS ONE SHOULD GO THROUGH TOO!!
HIS REAL GOAL IS TOI-TOI WITH MIDDLE-NUMBER TILES, IS IT?
HIROYUKI'S HAND

RON!
I'M SURE THOSE 1-MAN AND 9-MAN TILES WERE BAIT AND HE WAS WAITING ON MIDDLE NUMBER TILES
A CLOSE WIN!!
TAN, PIN, SANSHOKU, MANGAN.
I CAN'T SEE YOUR HAND, BUT THAT SHOULD'VE BEEN RIGHT ON.
I'M GOING TO WIN THIS GAME!
I SEE WHAT YOU'RE DOING!!

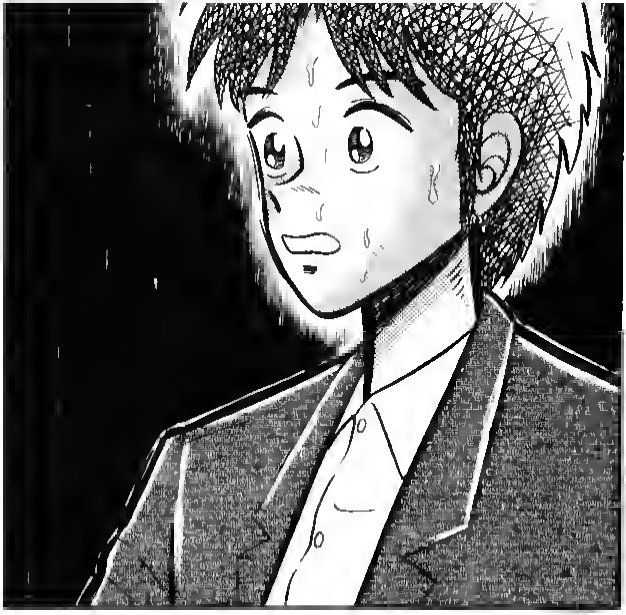
THANKS.
FOR YOU TOO, SIR.
HERE YOU ARE
THE TEA IS HERE
AND TEN IS ONLY DEALER IN THE LAST ROUND
POINT-WISE, I'M IN THE LEAD RIGHT NOW, TOO
TEN-HOU CHUU-REN?
ニヤラ…
THE 1-MAN AND 9-MAN

IT DIDN'T FEEL LIKE TEN WAS GOING TO WIN THIS LAST ROUND FROM THE VERY BIGINNING. HIS GOAL WAS JUST TO GET HIS HANDS ON THREE OF THE 1-MAN AND 9-MAN TILES.
TEN COULD HAVE GOTTEN HIS HANDS ON THREE OF THE 1-MAN AND 9-MAN TILES
OH SHIT
IT WAS BAIT...
SO THAT'S WHAT THAT ROUND WAS...
WE DON'T KNOW FOR SURE THAT WE'VE BEEN HAD, YET
WE JUST HAVE TO NOT MISS IT.
CALM DOWN.

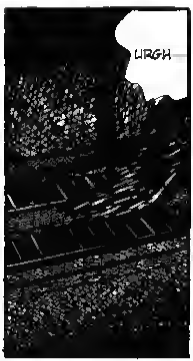

RIGHT, RIGHT, IT'S NOT LIKE WE'D MISS SEEING HIM GRAB IT.
AS LONG AS THE LIGHTS DON'T GO OUT.

ユラ…
グチャ
モグ

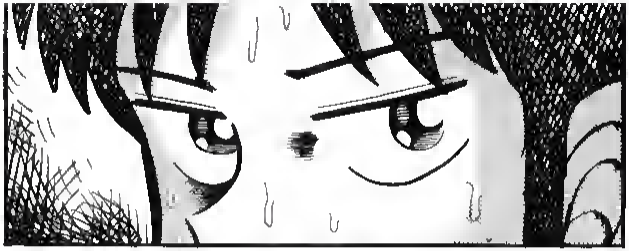
チカ…
チカ…
WHAT!!

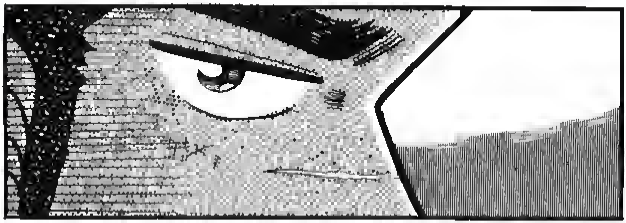


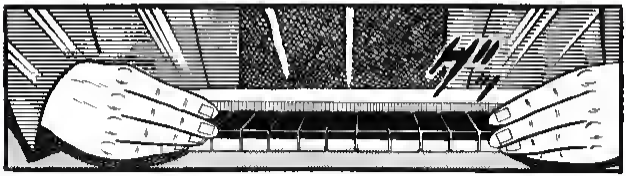
SHIT


URGH

チカ チカ…



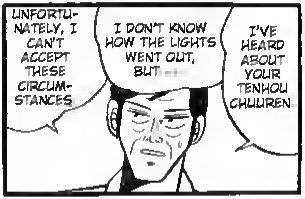



Hm

WAIT!

KH

WE'LL RE-DEAL!
BEFORE YOU OPEN YOUR HAND, I HAVE TO TELL YOU THOSE TILES WON'T COUNT.

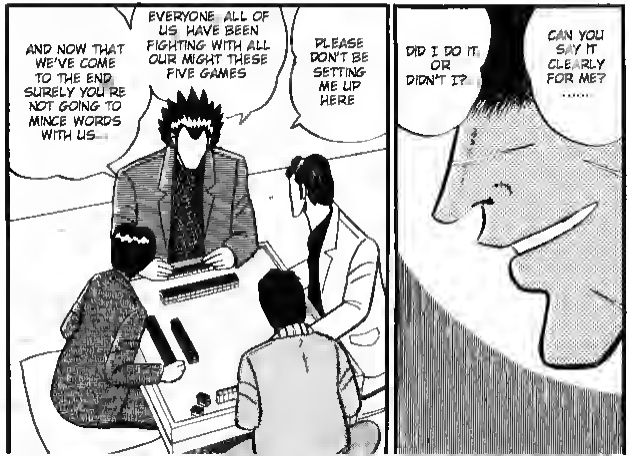

UNFORTU-NATELY, I CAN'T ACCEPT THESE CIRCUM-STANCES.
I DON'T KNOW HOW THE LIGHTS WENT OUT, BUT
I'VE HEARD ABOUT YOUR TENHOU CHUUREN.

WHY?

THAT I DID SOMETHING JUST NOW?
ARE YOU SAYING

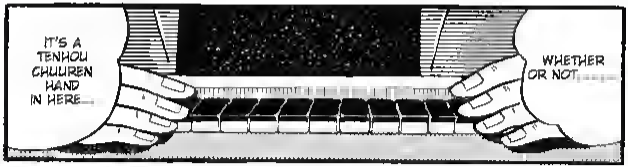
IT'S A BIT QUESTION-ABLE

SAWADA

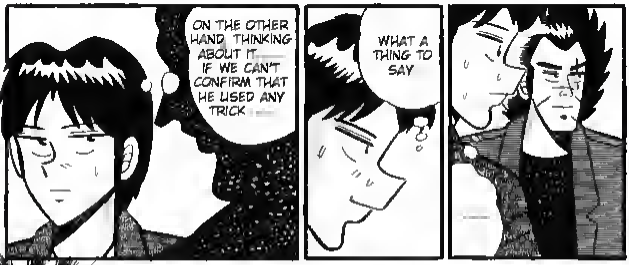

AND NOW THAT WE'VE COME TO THE END SURELY YOU'RE NOT GOING TO MINCE WORDS WITH US
EVERYONE ALL OF US HAVE BEEN FIGHTING WITH ALL OUR MIGHT THESE FIVE GAMES
PLEASE DON'T BE SETTING ME UP HERE
DID I DO IT OR DIDN'T I?
CAN YOU SAY IT CLEARLY FOR ME? .....

THEY TREAT MAHJONG AS A GAME...
LIKE THE GAMBLING I'VE SEEN FROM STUDENTS AND SALARYMEN EVERYWHERE.
THAT'S...
THE MAHJONG WE CAME HERE TO PLAY IS
SAWADA
BUT WE'RE DIFFERENT RIGHT?
A SERIOUS MATCH, ISN'T IT?
.....
A TRUE GAMBLE

CHAPTER
10
MAN OF ACTION
バンステップス
5F

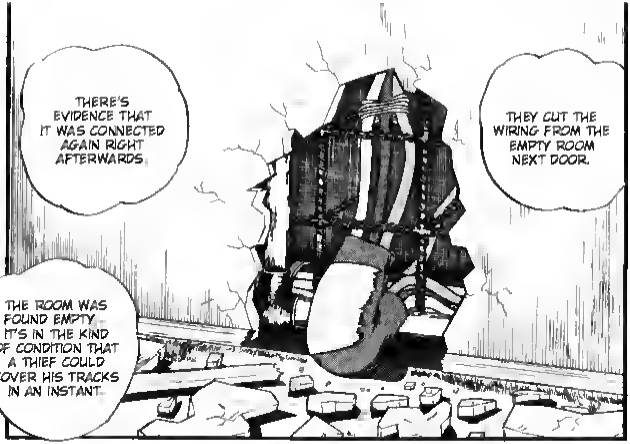

IT'S A TENHOU CHUUREN HAND IN HERE...
WHETHER OR NOT...

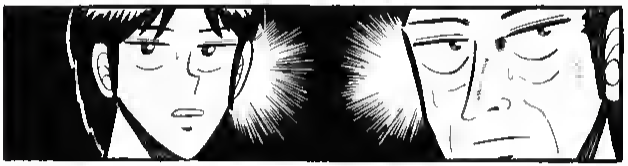
ISN'T THAT RIGHT.....?
ALL WE'RE AFTER IS TO GET IT AND GO HOME...
OWNER-SHIP OF THE OLD FELLA'S SHOP.
TONIGHT... WHAT WE'RE BETTING ON IS
IF... YOU CAN'T EVEN CONFIRM THAT THERE WAS ANY TRICKERY
IT'S NOTHING MORE THAN A PLOT TO SET ME UP


ON THE OTHER HAND, THINKING ABOUT IT... IF WE CAN'T CONFIRM THAT HE USED ANY TRICK...
WHAT A THING TO SAY

TEN'S UNBELIEVABLE

SAWADA!!
ガチャ!!
I'M SORRY ABOUT THE LIGHTS JUST NOW.
WE WERE BEING WATCHFUL, BUT...
DID THE BREAKERS GO?
NO.
THEY CUT THE WIRING!
IT SEEMS THAT THERE WAS A THIEF THAT SNUCK INTO ROOM 308 NEXT DOOR
THEY WERE FINE, BUT...


THERE'S EVIDENCE THAT IT WAS CONNECTED AGAIN RIGHT AFTERWARDS.
THEY CUT THE WIRING FROM THE EMPTY ROOM NEXT DOOR.
THE ROOM WAS FOUND EMPTY. IT'S IN THE KIND OF CONDITION THAT A THIEF COULD COVER HIS TRACKS IN AN INSTANT.

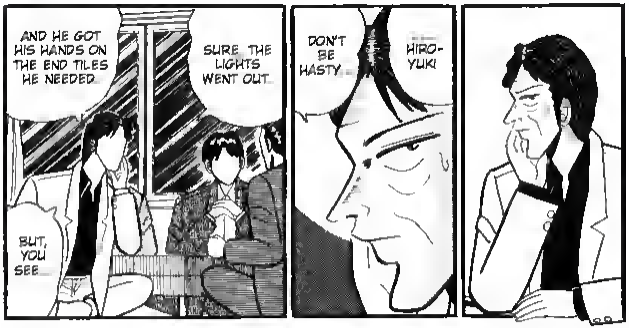


HMMM

IN THIS BUSINESS, YOU GET TO KNOW ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE, HUH.
HUH. IT'S OFTEN HARD TO SEE WHAT'S RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOUR EYES.

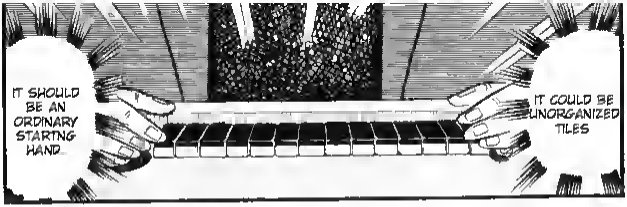
I SEE

SAWADA...
...

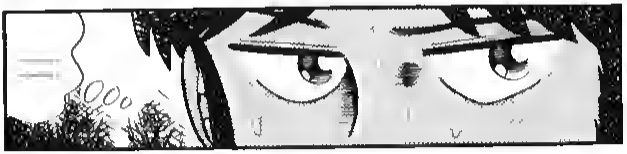

AND HE GOT HIS HANDS ON THE END TILES HE NEEDED.
SURE. THE LIGHTS WENT OUT.
BUT, YOU SEE...
DON'T BE HASTY...
HIRO-YUKI
...

IT'S NOT NECESSARILY ABOUT WHAT TEN DID JUST NOW...
.....YOU MIGHT SAY

NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT TOO...
YEAH...
RATHER, IT'S THE OPPOSITE.
IT'S PRETTY MUCH A LOSING GAMBLE.
HE'LL BE BEATEN HALF TO DEATH...
WHEN IT'S REVEALED... IF IT'S A CHUURENHAND, IT'LL BE UNFORGIVABLE.
WHEN THE GAME'S LOST...
IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT FROM TEN'S SIDE, THE DANGER OF DOING THE TENHOU CHUURENTRICK HERE IS A BIT TOO HIGH.
HE COULD PLAY THE MATCH NORMALLY, ON THE LEVEL... IT'S NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO OVERTURN THE POINT DIFFERENCE OF 8000.
IF... HE DIDN'T LAY A TRAP, THAT'D BE FINE TOO...
IN THAT CASE, IT WOULDN'T MATTER WHICH WAY THINGS WENT...!
CAREFULLY TAKING A NUMBER OF STEPS SO THAT THE PLAN WOULDN'T BLOW UP IN HIS FACE.
MORE IMPORTANTLY, HE'S BEEN BUILDING UP THE CONDITIONS HE NEEDED TO PRETEND HE WAS A TSUIBAME-GAESHI TENHOU CHUURENT


IT SHOULD BE AN ORDINARY STARTING HAND...
IT COULD BE UNORGANIZED TILES

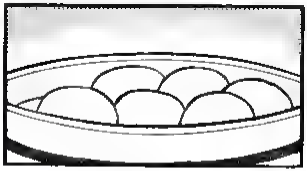
BUT ISN'T TEN THE KIND OF GUY THAT WOULD GO FOR THAT REMAINING 1%...?
...99% TEN'S BLUFF
I'M 99% SURE IT'S A STRATEGY MEANT TO DESTROY US...

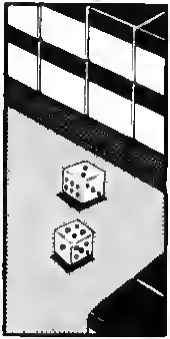


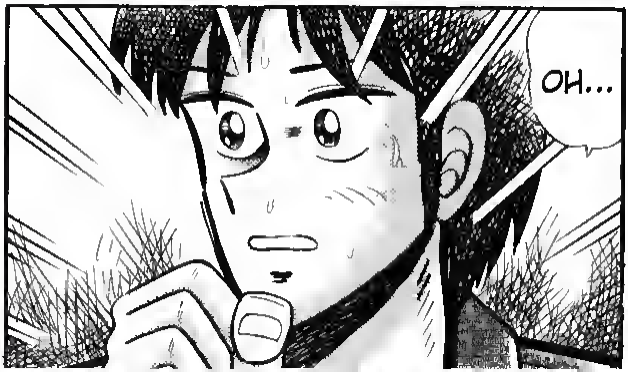
THERE HAS TO BE SOME CLUE.....
REMEMBER, BEFORE THE LIGHTS WENT OUT
I CAN'T LEAVE MY FORTRESS OF LOGIC
NO MATTER WHAT I DO
I HAVE TO FIND SOME-THING ELSE TO WORK WITH
THINKING THIS WAY, I COULD GO AROUND IN CIRCLES FOREVER.
IT'S NO GOOD

THAT'S RIGHT—
THEY BROUGHT OUT THE TEA—

AT THAT TIME, BEFORE THE LIGHTS WENT OUT.

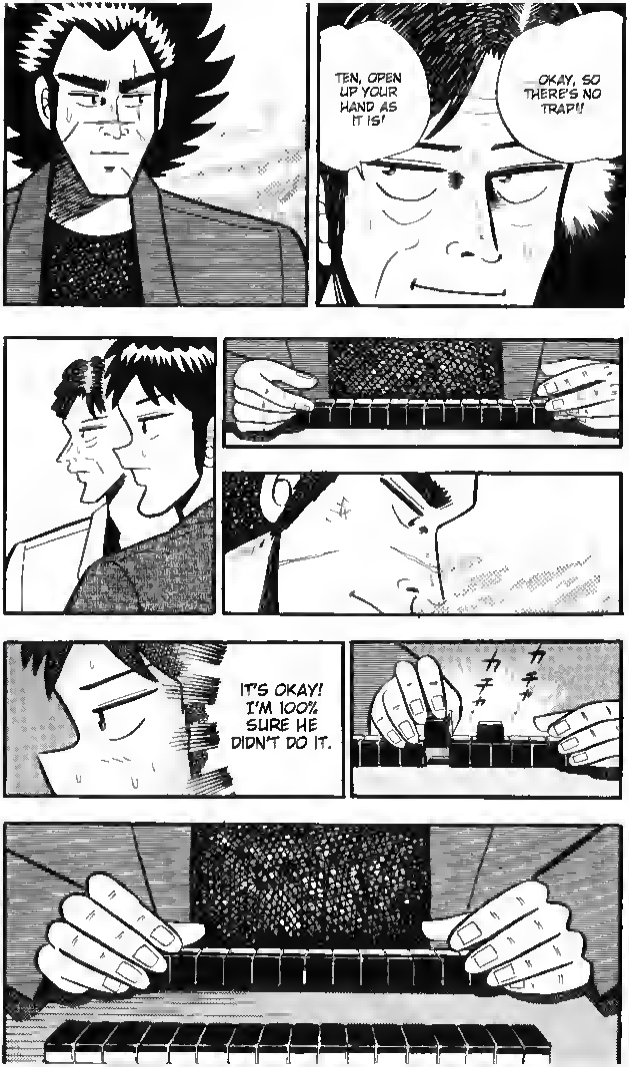





OH...

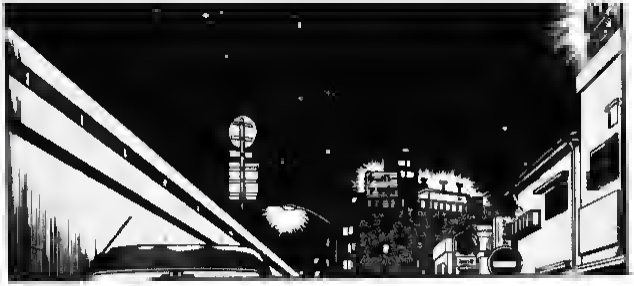
SAWADA
WHAT'S UP HIROYUKI?
TEN DIDN'T DO IT.
TEN'S BLUFFING, SAWADA
IT'S OKAY

FLOUR FROM THE RICE CAKES?
YES...
THE FLOUR FROM THE RICE CAKES THAT WERE BROUGHT OUT WITH THE TEA A MOMENT AGO...
THE KEY EVIDENCE IS
IF THAT HAD BEEN HIS PLAN, TILES WITH FLOUR ON THEM SHOULD BE IN THE WALL...
AS YOU KNOW, SINCE TSUBAME-GAESHI IS A TECHNIQUE TO SWITCH 14 TILES IN ONE'S OWN WALL WITH ONE'S STARTING HAND...
THE FLOUR ISN'T ON THE WALL...
TEN PUT HIS HANDS ON THE TILES...
IF YOU LOOK CAREFULLY, YOU'LL SEE WHAT I MEAN
AND THEN THE CRUCIAL POINT IS THAT THIS WAS AFTER WE WERE FINISHED BUILDING THE WALLS...
TEN WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO HAD A RICE CAKE IN HIS HAND...
IN SHORT, MY MAIN PREMISE IS THAT THERE ISN'T ANY FLOUR FROM THE RICE BALLS ON THE WALL
I SEE
TEN COULDN'T HAVE MADE THE SWITCH
IN SHORT


TEN, OPEN UP YOUR HAND AS IT IS!
OKAY, SO THERE'S NO TRAP!!
IT'S OKAY! I'M 100% SURE HE DIDN'T DO IT.
カチャ
カチャ

I'LL JUST TAKE THIS AND BE OUT OF HERE, SAWADA.
WELL THEN - SORRY, BUT
TEN!!
CHUUREN POUTOU
TENHOU

IN TOTAL, THREE WINS, TWO LOSSES VICTORY TO TEN'S SIDE!
THE 5TH GAME FINISHED BY DROPPING THE OTHER SIDE BELOW ZERO...
I'M JUST ONE STEP AHEAD
YOU'VE GOT A GOOD EYE
GOOD WORK...
バタン…
SURE
LET'S GO



IT'S NOT LIKE YOU HAD TIME TO GET THE FLOUR OFF
HOW DID YOU DO IT? I HAVEN'T GOT A CLUE

HIROYUKI WAS SHARP
THAT'S NOT IT.

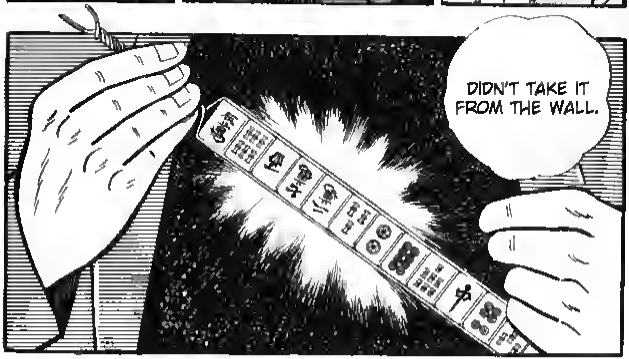
OH MAN..... WHEN HE POINTED OUT ABOUT THE RICE CAKES..... I WAS 100% SURE YOU'D MISSED YOUR CHANCE AND WAS ALL DISAPPOINTED BUT...
IN THE END, THAT KID REALLY MISSED THE MARK.
NO——

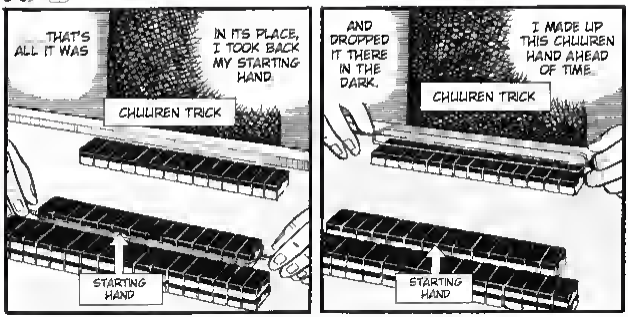
JUST A LITTLE BIT FURTHER— HALF A STEP FURTHER, IS WHAT HE COULDN'T PREDICT.
JUST——

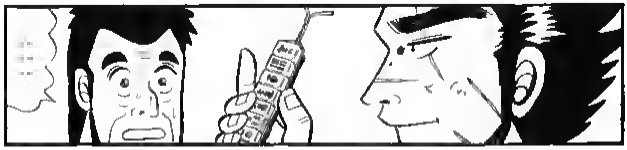
OH WOW~
THAT WAS AMAZING, AMAZING!

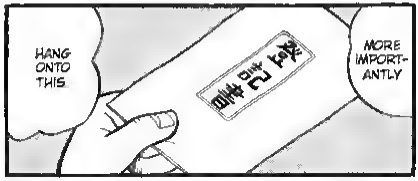
HUH?
THAT HALF A STEP AHEAD I'M TALKING ABOUT IS MOSTLY
FOUL PLAY...

I...
THIS TIME
?


DIDN'T TAKE IT FROM THE WALL.


THAT'S ALL IT WAS
CHULIREN TRICK
STARTING HAND
IN ITS PLACE, I TOOK BACK MY STARTING HAND.
AND DROPPED IT THERE IN THE DARK.
CHULIREN TRICK
STARTING HAND
I MADE UP THIS CHULIREN HAND AHEAD OF TIME.




HANG ONTO THIS.
MORE IMPORTANTLY

WHEN IT'S REVEALED, IT'S LIKE SOME KIND OF CHILDREN'S TRICK...
HUH
BUT THOSE GUYS WHO'D BEEN CAUTIOUS SO FAR WEREN'T WATCHING FOR THIS

I'VE REALLY LEARNED MY LESSON THIS TIME.
ENOUGH, ENOUGH!
IF YOU WANT TO KEEP IT, DON'T LET IT OUT OF YOUR HANDS AGAIN
IT'S YOUR NEST EGG, ISN'T IT?!

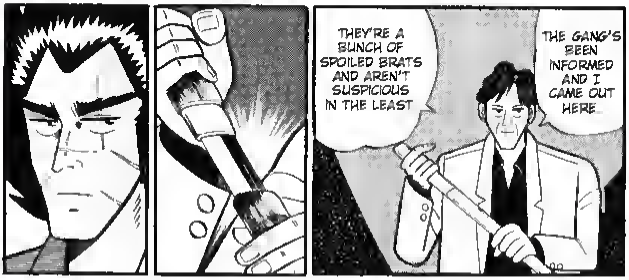
GET OUTTA HERE!
GEE... IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO TO REPAY YOU...
THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH

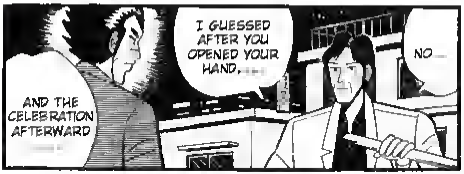
WELL, I'LL GIVE YOU MY THANKS TOMORROW
I WANT TO BE ALONE, GO ON!
HUH?

GET OUT HERE
COME ON, SAWADA.

I'LL TELL YOU RIGHT NOW... I'M NOT GOING TO GIVE IT BACK....
I'VE FINISHED MY JOB
YEAH.

HE'S RESTING IN THE ROOM.
WHERE'S HIROYUKI?
WELL, HE PROBABLY WON'T GET MUCH SLEEP TONIGHT THOUGH...


THEY'RE A BUNCH OF SPOILED BRATS AND AREN'T SUSPICIOUS IN THE LEAST
THE GANG'S BEEN INFORMED AND I CAME OUT HERE...


I GUESSED AFTER YOU OPENED YOUR HAND...
NO...
AND THE CELEBRATION AFTERWARD

SO I GUESS YOU NOTICED IT EARLIER

YOU WON THAT MATCH.

ONCE I'VE BEEN MADE AWARE OF YOUR IMPUDENCE, I CAN'T JUST LET YOU LEAVE...
BUT, WELL... EVEN THOUGH IT'S BEEN NOTICED A LITTLE TOO LATE...
WHY ARE YOU LAYING YOUR LIFE ON THE LINE?
TEN...
FOR OTHER PEOPLES' SAKE?
WHY ARE YOU LAYING YOUR LIFE ON THE LINE...

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